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EXPLORING PLACE AS A PRODUCER OF LOCALIZED ART STYLES AND ITS
ROLE IN A CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ART WORLD

By

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B.A., Northern State University, 2017

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Art (c) and Art
History/ Critical and Curatorial Studies

Department of Fine Arts
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2019

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A Thesis Approved on

April 22, 2019

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING PLACE AS A PRODUCER OF LOCALIZED ART STYLES AND ITS ROLE IN A CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ART WORLD

Alexis Doerr

April 22, 2019

Place as influencing the production of local art idioms is examined. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* and Michael Baxandall's concept of visual capacity explain the social, economic, and physical structures that comprise place and affect how people perceive and evaluate the world around them. Art education, professional development opportunities, and local arts spending are discussed as the main structures of place that shape local art idioms and art making processes. South Dakota artists Harvey Dunn, Terry Redlin, and Dorothy Morgan are used as a case study. The writer argues that due to globalization the long-standing structure of art center and periphery is shifting to one comprised of more dispersed networks and locations of recognized art production. The FRONT Triennial in Cleveland, Ohio, Open Spaces in Kansas City, Missouri, and Prospect New Orleans, in New Orleans, Louisiana are discussed as examples of second-tier cities that are combining their local art culture with international art discourse.

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INTRODUCTION

“As much as an artwork is intended to go beyond the actual location of its creation, it is first of all and above all saturated with the artist’s experience in this particular concrete place,” stated Robert Menasse.¹ While art seems to be a public, autonomous entity, it remains reminiscent of place, of the stories and experiences that formed the artists’ disposition and practice. Whether positive, negative or complicated, association with place remains a source of artistic creation.

Place is comprised of social, economic, and physical structures that influence the formation of localized art styles that embody the local culture based on audience preferences and methods of evaluation. Local art markets and communities exist within an art center and periphery structure that determines how art production and discourse is disseminated: from the center outwards. Although the periphery is an ongoing contributor of cultural capital to the art center, it has to navigate local art preferences and the criteria dispersed from the center. The era of globalization has led to a revising of the local and is shifting the long-standing periphery-art center structure. The overarching intent is to assert that place produces local art styles that preside as “modern” to the immediate place and surrounding region in which they are created.

¹ Julien Robson, “Introducing *here*,” in *Here*, ed. Julien Robson (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2011), 11.

The premise of this thesis derives from the author's long-standing observations of growing up in South Dakota and being an emerging artist. Living in the art world periphery with the closest major city five hours away, the ideas presented throughout reflect the author's first-hand experiences in contemplating the balance of making artwork that appeases local art preferences, and wanting to challenge and experiment with their practice.

On a larger scale some concepts and terms within this thesis remain subjective and adaptive because of their sheer complexity and interdisciplinary nature. The following definitions are intended to specify and clarify the broad concepts in relation to the thesis topics and overarching discussion.

Political geographer John A. Agnew's definition of *place* is based on three-parts: location, locale, and sense of place.² "*Location* refers to the where of something," either "in a relative sense," or in a physical and quantifiable way, such as longitude and latitude.³ *Locale* is "the material context for social and cultural life."³ It is the "collection of material things" that are observable and tangible signifiers of a location.³ For example, when describing Disney World: Cinderella's Castle, Florida, theme parks, and Mickey Mouse are a few of the visual materials that help define it as a place. Lastly, *sense of place* is "the way in which places are given meaning."³ Personal experiences determine and attach meaning to places.³ How people encounter and interact with the physical and social attributes of a place create associations with it, both positive and negative. Additionally, "senses of place are mediated and shared," through forms of media and

² Tim Cresswell, "Place Part I," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, ed. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016) 235-237.

³ Cresswell, *Place: Part I*, 235-237.

other people's experiences.⁴ Agnew's definition presents a holistic understanding of place, taking into account not just the physical attributes, but the social and personal as well. Thus, when using the term 'place,' it is intended to reference these converging elements.

Region is a geographic grouping and generalization.⁵ "A generalization of the characteristics of area is accomplished by defining categories of area difference in terms of selected criteria."⁵ Climate, and geographic characteristics are common criteria of established regions because they create environments that support different industries, economies, and lifestyles. While regions can be more diverse and varied economically and politically due to a larger area being specified, geographic proximity still produces particular needs and challenges. For example, the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) has established regions they utilize for distributing funding and in addressing specific regional needs.⁶ The term 'regional art or artist' refers to the location of the artwork or artist and the immediate states surrounding it. This is also intended to reference the immediate network of gallery spaces, museums, and organizations that artists have access to. Finishing it with Michael Steiner's definition of region as, "The largest unit of territory about which a person can grasp 'the concrete realities of the land,' or which can be contained in a person's genuine sense of place."⁷

⁴ Ibid., 235-237.

⁵ Preston E. James, "Toward a Further Understanding of the Regional Concept," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 42, no. 3 (1952): 199-200. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2561139>.

⁶ "State and Regional Arts Organizations," National Endowment for the Arts, Accessed April 8, 2019, <https://www.arts.gov/partners/state-regional>.

⁷ Lucy R. Lippard. *Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentered society* (New York: New Press, 1997), 34.

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, which will be discussed in depth further on in chapter three, ascribes worth and value to "culture and cultural processes."⁸ Bourdieu argues that it can exist in three forms: "in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods, and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification."⁹ Capital as a concept has enabled culture to be viewed as a resource "that provides access to scarce rewards, is subject to monopolization, and may be transmitted from one generation to the next."⁹ It represents the assigning of value to and accumulating of labor.⁹ Throughout this thesis, cultural capital will encompass the three forms of embodiment, and the capacity to produce and disseminate art discourse and criticism. It draws upon Bourdieu's ideas of education, consumption, and taste, and is applied to place influencing the outcome of these components converging.¹⁰

The following pieces of literature are resources that support and informed the multiple avenues within this thesis. They represent the interdisciplinary study and perspectives of art historians, curators, critics, and human geography.

Cultivating Citizens: The Regional Work of Art in the New Deal Era by Lauren Kroiz provided a close reading of artists Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and Stuart Curry within the Regionalism art movement.¹¹ It is positioned as a way of examining how 'art experts' are determined and what they contribute to society and different art

⁸ Annette-Lareau and Elliot B. Weininger, "Cultural Capital in Education Research: A Critical Assessment," *Theory and Society* 32, no. 5-6 (December 2003): 567. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3649652>.

⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Power and Ideology in Education*, eds. Jerome Karabel and A. H. Halsey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 46-49.

¹⁰ Gary Bridge, "Pierre Bourdieu," in *A Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, eds. Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin and Gill Valentine (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 59-63.

¹¹ Lauren Kroiz. *Cultivating Citizens: The Regional Work of Art in the New Deal Era* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

institutions.¹² Benton, Wood, and Stuart's philosophies on art, art making, and teaching are analyzed against the backdrop of the growing institutionalization of art education during the early 20th century.¹² From this, the challenges and criticisms the three artists faced reveal differences in art education methods and whom art should be intended for. In titling it *Cultivating Citizens*, Kroiz emphasizes the focus on Benton and Wood's shared perspective of art that engages with the public and thus encourages them to be appreciative consumers of art.¹²

Here. a compilation of essays by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts features art critics, curators, historians addressing the current state of the 'local' in the globalizing art world.¹³ The depth of discussion examining the structure of art center and the periphery provided specific evidence for chapter two. It reaffirms the relevance and larger conversation of 'place' influencing an artist's work.¹⁴ The sections written by Julien Robson, Erika Doss, and Christopher Cook were referenced the most.¹⁴

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Human Geography edited by John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan is comprehensive writings of major human geography sub-disciplines.¹⁵ The chapters discussing Place, Globalization, and World Cities are referenced due to the defining of common terms and the critical approach from a non-art world perspective.¹⁵

The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds edited by Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel focuses on the effects of globalization in

¹² Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*.

¹³ "Here.," ed. Julien Robson (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2011).

¹⁴ Robson, *Here.*, 11-37.

¹⁵ *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, ed. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016).

changing the structures of power and influence in the contemporary art world.¹⁶ The concept of ‘multiple modernities’ is derived from this text, which is a defining point in chapter five.¹⁶

The following examination and discussion of place, art making, and the persisting local in a contemporary global is confined to the United States to allow closer observation of process and pattern development.

The first chapter explains the complex relationship between American Modernism and the Regionalism art movement during the early to mid-20th century. In doing so, the initial introduction of art center and periphery as a concept is introduced, explaining the locus as beginning with Paris, France and leading to the rise of New York City as an art center in the early 20th century. Artists Thomas Hart Benton, and Grant Wood are utilized as a visual and contextual representation of the Regionalism art movement, with Edward Hopper as a point of comparison.

Chapter two expounds upon the concept of art center and periphery as it currently exists in the contemporary art world. In focusing on New York City as the main example of an art center, the specifics and implications of its influence over the accumulation and dissemination of cultural capital is explained. It emphasizes the periphery as a contributor to a larger apparatus that doesn’t look beyond itself, thus addressing the “hegemonic outward gaze” of New York City.¹⁷ The 2018 FRONT Triennial in Cleveland, Ohio is included as an example of an art center’s relation to and interaction with the periphery.

¹⁶ Zentrum Für Kunst Und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, “The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds,” eds. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM/Center for Art and Media, 2013).

¹⁷ Robson, *Here.*, 12.

Chapter three introduces the theoretical foundation of place as social and physical structures that exert influence on an individual. Pierre Bourdieu's habitus and Michael Baxandall's visual capacity explain how these structures form the personal disposition and preferences with which an individual interacts and perceives the world. From this, art making as informed and influenced by local culture is examined. To do so, the main components that comprise the habitus of a local art market and community are discussed: art education, professional development opportunities, and local arts spending.

Chapter four connects these components in placing South Dakota as a case study of habitus and visual capacity. The styles and subject matter of South Dakota artists Harvey Dunn, Terry Redlin, and Dorothy Morgan are used as examples. In looking at the state's specific local culture and art market, the 2017 *South Dakota Constituent Survey Report* is referenced because it addresses the status of art education, and the challenges facing local artists and art organizations within the state.¹⁸

Chapter five addresses the era of globalization and its effect on local culture and art making. How and why the local persists is explored, looking to the concept of place-identity as an explanation for people's ongoing tie to place. This is connected to the increase of art events and biennales in second-tier cities such as Cleveland, OH, New Orleans, LA, and Kansas City, MO as a method of promoting city and local identity. As a result, the center-periphery relationship is shifting to a "two-way street" approach in sharing and disseminating art production and discourse. The chapter concludes with

¹⁸ Craig Dresszen, "2017 South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report," *The South Dakota Arts Council and Arts South Dakota*, May 31, 2017.

Dialogue As Art, a local art event that serves as an example of collaboration between national and local organizations to facilitate programming.

CHAPTER I

AMERICAN MODERNISM AND REGIONALISM AS A HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF ART CENTER AND PERIPHERY

Grant Wood, best known for painting *American Gothic* (1930), built his art career in Iowa during the Regionalism art movement of the 1930s.¹⁹ It was an epoch that celebrated the American way of life in order to counter the devastating environmental and economic effects of the Great Depression.²⁰ Simultaneously, American Modernism was gaining in popularity due to the 1913 Armory show in New York City that introduced European avant-garde modernism to the United States art scene.²¹ Although Regionalism is technically a tendril of modernism, its foundation in New Deal policies and concepts as a path to social reform opposed American Modernism support of personal expression.²² As a result, Regionalist art and artists soon faced claims of fascism and nationalism, which lead to the movement's drastic decline in the 1940s. Over the course of his career, particularly while working in Stone City, Iowa, Wood recalled being "warned frequently that he would have to move to an urban center to succeed as an

¹⁹ Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 35.

²⁰ Erika Doss, "Cultural Globalization and Critical Regionalism in Contemporary Art," in *Here.*, ed. Julien Robson (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2011), 21.

²¹ Judith Zilczer, "The World's New Art Center: Modern Art Exhibitions in New York City, 1913-1918," *University of Chicago*, 1974, Access January 29, 2019.
<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/aaa.14.3.1556944>.

²² Erika Doss, *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 253.

artist.”²³ Thomas Hart Benton faced similar criticisms, especially after leaving New York City for Kansas City, MO. Art historian Milton Brown claimed that in moving Benton “had lost the promise of becoming ‘the’ American artist.”²⁴ The historical relationship between American Modernism and the Regionalism reveals the underlying hierarchical structure of “art center” and “periphery” that still exists today, based on the influence over and dissemination of cultural capital.

An art center or art capital is considered a dominant metropolitan area that asserts to be the forefront of the art world, producing and greatly influencing art discourse.²⁵ Art centers are also regarded as “a monolithic or ‘most important’ place where artists must live and work if they are going to be taken seriously.”²⁵ The notion of “art center” emerged with Paris, France during the late-nineteenth century. As “a beacon of light and culture” Paris’ copious salons, galleries, and art institutions drew artists from across the globe, providing the education, spaces, and patrons to support a healthy art market.²⁶ Artists numbered in the thousands, and at one point “the annual Salon jury *reduced* its selection of works for display to a privileged 5,000-6,000 works.”²⁷ There was room to artistically experiment as well, provoking the beginning of modernism, the entire art world looking to Paris. “The relationship between Paris and its artists is visible in geography, in whole streets devoted to studios, in the distinct areas they favored, in its monuments, its collections and its art. To examine that relationship is to evoke the place

²³ Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 35.

²⁴ Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 151.

²⁵ Doss, *Cultural Globalization*, 20.

²⁶ Sarah Cascone, “9 Trailblazing Female Painters of the 19th Century You Really Should Know About,” *Artnet* news, August 20, 2018. <https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/women-artists-in-paris-1850-1900-clark-1329851.s>

²⁷ John Milner, *The Studios of Paris: The Capital of Art in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1-3.

as much as the time.”²⁸ Paris as an art center arose due to the immense amount of resources and opportunities made available as compared to other cities and locations.²⁸ These place-based opportunities contributed to its local culture, and the idea that only *this place*, being Paris, can provide what is needed to be a professional artist. Paris possessed enough influence to draw artists away from other places, localities, and communities, inciting the belief that places outside the art center were lacking and limiting. At the time, even New York City was considered to be in the art periphery, its art scene existing in the shadow of Paris’s influence.

The 1913 Armory Show exposed the American public to European avant-garde modernism, and prompted New York City’s ascent as “the World’s New Art Center” as proclaimed by art critic Frederick James Gregg.²⁹ The show “has been considered the only exhibition of the early twentieth century whose scope and significance equaled avant-garde activity in Europe.”³⁰ American art would remain forever changed; between 1913 and 1918 roughly 250 exhibitions of American and European artworks were held, “regarded by the public as ‘modern’ or ‘progressive.’”³⁰ Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912) (Fig. 1) drew the most attention and controversy, becoming “an important rallying cry for the nascent American avant-garde, who were impressed by Duchamp’s unique approach to Cubism and his commitment to artistic freedom.”³¹ Cubism and abstraction were amongst the new styles introduced, the non-objective, apolitical approach contrasting with the predominant artwork being funded by the Works

²⁸ Milner, *The Studios of Paris*, 1-3.

²⁹ Zilczer, *The World’s New Art Center*, 6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

³¹ Michael R. Taylor, “Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase* [No. 2] and The 1913 Armory Show Scandal Revisited,” in *Archives of American Art Journal* 51, no. 3-4 (2012): 50-65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43155387>.

Progress Administration and Federal Works Agency.³² The revolutionary ideas presented at the 1913 Armory Show provided newfound stimuli for American artists, and served as the creative locus of American modernism. Personal and cultural expression started to become a main intent in art making.³³ Throughout the 1930s, New York City ascended as the hotbed of ideas surrounding American modernism, serving as a draw for artists around the world.

As mentioned previously, Regionalism in part grew out of bolstering American morale during the era of the Great Depression.³⁴ “Regionalism corresponded to the New Deal’s larger cultural and political project of blending America’s multiple regions and publics into a national picture of unity.”³⁵ Thus, *regional* as a term emerged as federal leaders and local artists sought to group varied “sometimes disparate publics in programs and images.”³⁶ This resulted in the idealization of a particular “Americanism” derived from a collective vision of American life, industry, and landscapes largely influenced by the New Deal policies. Romanticized daily life became prevalent, establishing agrarian and landscape themes as the traditional culture of America.

The panel *Midwest* (Fig. 2) from Thomas Hart Benton’s *America Today* (1930) mural is a notable example of stylized realism and idealism converging.³⁷ It is a region-specific panel that visually categorizes the people and their primary industry. Notice how people are the main subjects of this panel: people drive the tractors, work the fields, and

³² Ibid., 51-52.

³³ Doss, *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism*, 270.

³⁴ Lillian B. Miller, “American Narrative Painting/The American Scene/The Great American Nude (Book Review),” in *American Historical Review* 81, no. 1 (1976): 202. *Art & Architecture Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 30, 2017).

³⁵ Doss, *Cultural Globalization*, 21.

³⁶ Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 12.

³⁷ H.W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson, *A Basic History of Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Incorporated, 1992), 437.

saw the lumber; people are idealized in this panel as the drivers of American industry, and progress. In his artworks Benton “painted the organic producerism of the past with its emphasis on skilled labor and worker autonomy.”³⁸ Regionalist art embraced this concept of “Americanism” that aligned with white masculinity, and revered traditional manual labor often associated with pastoralism and agrarian practices. The “Americanism” of urbanity was not a common visual narrative because it disrupted the idea of organic producerism existing in a contemporary setting.³⁸ Regionalism opposed the “centralization and standardization identified with cities,” and emphasized the “Americanism” of rural living and the collective autonomy it seemed to provide.³⁹ Grant Wood’s *Stone City* (1930) (Fig. 3) is representative of these concepts; the warm earth tones convey nostalgia and naturalism. The picturesque, and placid imagery conveys a hint of innocence, yet a source of dignity in the structured rows of growing crops alongside the presence of buildings and other modern technology. The Regionalism art movement was prominent and revered by those its imagery often depicted. The grandeur of people living in and working with the environment through the unity of traditional labor and trade was the idealized “Americanism” Regionalists, such as Benton and Wood, artistically captured.

Compare the work of Benton and Wood with *Office in A Small City* (1953) (Fig. 4), *Automat* (1927) (Fig. 5), and *Lighthouse Hill* (1927) (Fig. 6) by Edward Hopper. Born in the late 19th century and producing the majority of his work in the 1910s-60s, Hopper painted at the same time as Benton and Wood. This provides a direct comparison of

³⁸ Doss, *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism*, 70.

³⁹ Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 11.

artistic style and subject based on place during the same time period. Raised in Nyack, NY, only an hour from the center of New York City, Hopper attended different cultural events such as concerts and museums at an early age.⁴⁰ The acute awareness he held towards his sources of influence is similar to Benton, Wood, and Dunn's acknowledged interest in depicting the narratives of rural life. There's a specificity of intent with these artists, a communal relationship with and understanding of how their immediate environment is the foundation of their art practice.

Office in a Small City (1953) is a recurring composition style of Hopper's, which isolates the human subjects and places them off center. This compositional style enabled the artist to convey, "the detached observation of life" that formed his painterly position.⁴¹ Wide shots of locations such as diners and offices create a dramatic contrast between the presence of space and the human figure, as observed in *Automat* (1927). In the vast amounts of compositional space the moods of loneliness and isolation transpire, a vastly different artistic atmosphere as compared to Benton and Wood. Their works emphasize a communal component; either the human figure is interacting with others or with the environment around them. This reflects the relationship more rural areas have with the environment, whereas Hopper draws upon the isolation of the city and modern life.

To further accentuate the subject of urbanity, the use of muted, cooler tones by Hopper mimics the industrialization of cities. While some of his works may feature warm

⁴⁰ Carole Perry. "Edward Hopper Artist Overview and Analysis," *The Art Story*. June 2016. NGA Online Editions, <https://purl.org/nga/collection/constituent/1404> (accessed April 13, 2019). <https://www.theartstory.org/artist-hopper-edward.htm>.

⁴¹ Henry Geldzahler, "Edward Hopper," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 115. <https://www.metmuseum.org/pubs/bulletins/1/pdf/3257895.pdf.bannered.pdf>.

swatches of color, there is still an even coolness about them as compared to the color palette of Benton and Wood's paintings. *Cradling Wheat* (1938) (Fig. 7) by Benton and *Fall Plowing* (1931) (Fig. 8) by Grant, both of which share the similar subject of harvesting wheat. Despite some of the more muted hues in Benton's painting, such as the hill in the background or the sky, the overall tone of the work is warm. The foliage and clouds have a yellow or warm haze to them that matches the tone of the wheat field. *Fall Plowing* echoes the same sentiment; the golden hue is what romanticizes it and ties the work together. It evokes the idea of the big golden sun shining across "America's Heartland."⁴²

The Works Progress Administration was a substantial facet of the New Deal with its main intent of putting artists to work. Cultural historian Jonathan Harris argues, "the role of 'artist' was held to be necessarily compatible with that of citizen."⁴³ A 1939 *Life* magazine spread titled *Speaking of Pictures...This is Mural America for Rural Americans* featured images of the selected mural designs to be painted in various post offices.⁴⁴ The language used to explain the process and premise behind the imagery is significant, "As mural sketches, these are interesting...as barometers by which the everyday art taste of Rural America may be judged."⁴⁴ The murals were described as representing "the collective taste of the citizens of the community."⁴⁴ The spread continued with, "Apparently rural Americans are artistic stay-at-homes, with a preference for paintings that reproduce experiences and scenes and parts of history with which they are familiar."⁴⁴ The tone of the magazine spread casts Regionalism and the Midwest in a

⁴² Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 223.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁴ "Speaking of Pictures: This is Mural America for Rural Americans," *Life*, (1939): 12-15.

position of artistic otherness; operating outside the realm of American modernism as derived from the 1913 Armory Show. Regionalism art was the antithesis to New York City and the modern artworks being produced within the art center. “The Regionalists explored the ethnology of the local with particular ideological purpose: to provide an aesthetic counterpoint to an American art they felt was overly dominated by New York, to celebrate the distinctiveness of vernacular Americana.”⁴⁵

This distinguishing aspect of Regionalism led to connotations of nationalism and fascism due to romanticizing and idealizing the past using repetitive and recognizable imagery.⁴⁶ The artwork was considered propaganda, and abstract painter Stuart Davis asserted regionalists lacked class-consciousness.⁴⁶ Art critic H.W. Janson “complained that Regionalists had replaced aesthetic values with ‘Americanism,’ i.e., nationalism.”⁴⁶ In prioritizing representation over technique, he argued that Regionalist priorities blocked aesthetic development due to its “intense emotionalism of narrative.”⁴⁶ It is important to note the problematic characteristics of Regionalism because it did not take place in a vacuum. The prominent style and imagery resulted in characterizations of people and lifestyles drawn from stereotypes. While the movement seems to encompass the greatness of America’s heartland, it also reinforced idealized depictions that did not necessarily reflect reality.

In addition to the significant criticisms regarding Regionalism, this American art style, “was declared provincial, especially when it was lifted out of its original context and compared with the mighty modernism of Europe,” as MoMA institutionalized

⁴⁵ Doss, *Cultural Globalization*, 21.

⁴⁶ Doss, *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism*, 68-118.

modernism in the early 1930s.⁴⁷ Benton's New School mural just did not look modern when posed against Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*.⁴⁷ It is important to note the established relationship between the art centers and periphery, consequentially between urban and rural, and the direction in which power over the art market flowed: from the art center outwards.

How sources outside the Midwest discussed and regarded artists and their artwork reveals a dynamic and complex relationship to how the art world is structured and interacts with the artistic periphery that still endures today. The perceived exchange of artistic influence is evident in *WPA Art Marches On*, written in 1937, "The educational significance of these regional galleries is greatest of course, outside of New York where, in many places, the people of this country have never before encountered an original painting or piece of sculpture."⁴⁸ The use of "original" in this excerpt hints at where New York City placed itself in the hierarchy of the art world. It implies that only art produced in New York City influences other artists, that inventiveness and "originality" disseminates from the city out. Thus from the perspective of New York City art culture, art from the periphery is not capable of creating work that rivals New York artists because it does not possess the same amount of resources, attention, and creative capital.

A Study of New Deal Murals in New York by Marlene Park compares WPA murals made in upstate New York and in New York City during the 1930s.⁴⁹ In her analysis, Park emphasized how the conditions under which the murals were painted

⁴⁷ Ibid., 90-91.

⁴⁸ Martha Davidson, "WPA Art Marches On: Federal Patronage Justifies Itself," *Art News Annual*, Volumes 21-24 (October 30, 1937): 143.

⁴⁹ Marlene Park, "City and Country in the 1930s: A Study of New Deal Murals in New York," *Art Journal* 39, no. 1 (Autumn 1979): 37-38.

affected the content of the work as well as its public reception.⁵⁰ In 1936, 2,323 WPA artists were working in the City, and 250 throughout the State.⁵⁰ Upstate artists received less pay; roughly \$75 a month while artists in the City received \$95 a month.⁵⁰ As for the visual content of the murals, the State exerted more control over the WPA, resulting in work that “was more conservative, less varied, and less experimental.”⁵⁰ In the City, WPA works were more visible, and “there were more classes in every sort of institution, and there was much more publicity in the daily press and art journals.”⁵⁰ Supervisors of murals in the City were considered “enlightened,” thus they promoted experimentation, and “controversial murals were more apt to be approved and survive criticism.”⁵⁰ Throughout the remainder of the State, Federal Art Galleries or Community Art Centers did not exist in the same capacity as the City, there were fewer supervisors to provide support, and the press reports reached fewer people.⁵⁰ This comparison demonstrates that the correlation of “art center” and the “periphery” is not strictly based on New York City versus states commonly identified with the Regionalism movement, such as Kansas, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Within the single state of New York, there existed a hierarchy of influence between the art center and periphery. It is apparent that with the State the public possessed more influence over the visual content of the murals, whereas in the City, artists experienced more flexibility and advocacy. The stark difference in the social and economic conditions the artists worked within is a presiding factor in the center/periphery hierarchy. This study also addresses some of the components that facilitated New York City’s expanding influence in the art world.

⁵⁰ Park, *City and Country in the 1930s*, 37-38.

The prolific art careers of Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and John Steuart Curry reveal the “hegemonic outward gaze” of New York City as an art center through the tone used in reviews and criticisms of their work.⁵¹ The triumvirate of the Regionalism movement were all teachers over the course of their careers, Benton most notably in Missouri, Wood in Iowa, and Curry both in Wisconsin and Kansas.⁵² *Time* magazine praised the artists’ “representational style, full of “recognizable observations” that stimulated public enthusiasm for art.”⁵³ The artists engaged with their local communities, treating “rural farmers in the Midwest as important participants rather than outsiders.”⁵⁴ Benton, Wood, and Curry represent the precarious position of artists working outside traditional art centers. They still underwent evaluation from art institutions and critics from the art centers, while operating within a completely different, localized art market. Benton’s choice to move to Missouri after living in New York City for twenty years garnered national attention and criticism.⁵⁵ In contemplating Benton’s move to Missouri, art historian Milton Brown claimed it “represented nothing more than a retreat to ruralism that returned him not to the well-springs of American life, but to its dead past and ghost towns.”⁵⁵ And in moving Benton “had lost the promise of becoming ‘the’ American artist.”⁵⁵ Here, success and professional longevity is associated with *place*, and what that place has to support and offer the artist. Ganso, Grant Wood’s temporary replacement at the Iowa Art Department argued “ ‘laymen’ rated Wood’s work far higher than ‘professional artists.’”⁵⁶ Wood was viewed as an artist for the public,

⁵¹ Julien Robson. *Introducing here.*, 12.

⁵² Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 21-206.

⁵³ Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

who regarded him as outstanding, whereas his peers notably thought less of him for various reasons, one being his artistic practice.⁵⁷

Analyzing Regionalism and American Modernism emphasizes the historical significance of *place* in influencing different art styles and audience receptivity. The various excerpts and statements indicate that each movement was receiving support from different audiences and had distinctive relationships with place. New York City artists experienced advocacy in creatively experimenting, and held a particular independence with their art-making process and choices. More resources, institutions and individuals dedicated to the professional development of artists fostered the creative independence in art making. Benton and Wood illustrate how artwork in less populous, more rural areas took on a more collaborative element with the public. The work they created served and represented the local in which they resided, hence the murals in public places. Benton established some of the first rural art programs under his approach that artwork should reach “ordinary people, not to lead them to any social revolution but to reflect the values he assumed they had and convince them that they too could appreciate and create art.”⁵⁸ Compare this to New York City’s relationship with the public, in which it existed more independently and received more support for experimenting with art techniques. The stark difference exemplifies that the preexisting structure or lack of one through which people can engage with and experience art determines what role artists will take in a community.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 63.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 115-117.

The Regionalism movement and rise of American Modernism took place almost concurrently, therefore comparing these movements side-by-side attests to the existence of “multiple modernities,” in which an art style adapts to the social and physical environment of place.⁵⁹ An art movement is complex, subjective and relative to local preferences, and methods of artistic evaluation. Stylistic changes represent a sense of ownership of how local artists adopted the style and made it relevant for themselves and their local community. In a way, prominent artists of a locality or region serve as a language for reading place.

⁵⁹ Zentrum Für Kunst Und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, *The Global Contemporary*, 18.

Fig. 1 *Nude Descending A Staircase* by Marcel Duchamp. Oil on canvas. 1912. Philadelphia Museum of Art. ARTstor.



Fig. 2 *Midwest* from *America Today* by Thomas Hart Benton. Egg tempera on wood panel. 1930-31. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/2012.478a-j/>



Fig. 3 *Stone City* by Grant Wood. Oil on composition board. 1930. University of California, San Diego. ARTstor.



Fig. 4 *Office in a Small City* by Edward Hopper. Oil on canvas. 1953. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. ARTstor.



Fig. 5 *Automat* by Edward Hopper. Oil on canvas. 1927. Contemporary Art Larry Qualls Archive. ARTstor.



Fig. 6 *Lighthouse Hill* by Edward Hopper. Painting. 1927. Dallas Museum of Art. ARTstor.



Fig. 7 *Cradling Wheat* by Thomas Hart Benton. Tempera and oil on board. 1938. Saint Louis Art Museum. ARTstor.



Fig. 8 *Fall Plowing* by Grant Wood. Oil on canvas. 1931. University of California, San Diego. ARTstor.



CHAPTER II

COMPONENTS OF THE CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER AND PERIPHERY STRUCTURE

The historical development and nature of the “art center” and “periphery” relies on art centers, such as New York City, accumulating creative capital and controlling the dissemination of it. Operating much like a one-way street, art centers are an amassing of domestic and international artistic skill, attracting talent and capital without having to extend itself to local and regional art markets. The immense influence, esteem and demand art centers have accumulated is perpetuated by this distinct identity “supported and maintained by its critical and market infrastructure.”⁶⁰ Its production and oversight of art discourse and the art market establishes a power-of-proximity effect. Lucy Lippard explains, “The difference between New York and “local” art scenes is that other places know what New York is up to but New York remains divinely oblivious to what’s happening off the market and reviewing map.”⁶¹ Although New York City possesses its own regional culture, its self-asserted hegemony places it in a position of producing standards of evaluation and comparison. The amount of cultural capital that art centers possess is the “capital’s relationship with information flow.”⁶² As fast as art can be

⁶⁰ Julien Robson, *Introducing here.*, 12.

⁶¹ Lucy Lippard, *Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 36.

⁶² Michelle Grabner and Jennifer Kabat, “A Discussion on Regionalism in the Arts” (Discussion panel, FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, Cleveland, OH, September 28, 2018).

created, art reviews and criticism can be written and published, while the prominent New York City auction houses Sotheby's and Christie's perpetuate the continuous flow of investment into the art market.

It is worth noting the difference between auction sales and galleries because they represent different methods of entry into and movement within the art market. Galleries can be associated with the primary market, where a "work is being sold for the first time."⁶³ Art dealers and gallery owners are intermediaries between artist and buyer; choosing to represent artists that fit within the dealer's specialized art style.⁶³ Represented artists are then able to exhibit in their respective gallery, with dealers often "maintaining a mentoring and nurturing as well as a commercial relationship."⁶⁴ Auction houses, such as Sotheby's and Christie's, constitute the secondary market, which is when a work "is up for resale."⁶⁵ Mediating between collectors is the more common function of art auction houses. Since the 1980s the exponential buying power they have acquired participating in both the primary and secondary markets has made it difficult for mid-level galleries to find room in the art market to remain competitive.⁶⁶

The historical development of the art market explains how New York City acquired the necessary resources to be competitive and a locus for accumulating cultural capital. Peter Wilson was a key player in auction houses attaining a large portion of the art market over the course of 1960-1980s.⁶⁶ While working at Sotheby's he "began to target the retail market, streamline the auction business, and revolutionize the marketing

⁶³ Kevin F. McCarthy, Elizabeth H. Ondaatje, Arthur Brooks and András Szántó^[1], "The Arts Market," in *A Portrait of the Visual Arts* (RAND Corporation, 2005), 61-71.

⁶⁴ McCarthy, *The Arts Market*, 63.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 62.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 64.

and operations of the auction houses.”⁶⁷ As a result, the process of valuing and pricing artwork changed, and the New York art market responded with continuous growth.

The active and concentrated presence of artists, curators, critics, dealers, and collectors has led to a pattern of art opinion development, how it is shared and reinforced. András Szántó explains that opinions first form in,

the inner-circle art world participants (dealers, curators, critics, and some collectors) and then begins by degree to the art world’s outer circle (secondary dealers and collectors, auction houses, the media). Long-term confirmation is given by museums and through inscription into the official canon of art history.⁶⁸

This assessment and assigning of value to art is a process created by the art center because it possesses the financial, social, and cultural capital to do so. The competitive, lucrative, and receptive local art market drives business and demand. A 2018 Arts Vibrancy Index ranks New York City as first in the United States for Arts Providers per capita, meaning it has the most venues dedicated to arts and culture per person.⁶⁹ It also shared the Mayor is “committed to building 1,500 units of affordable living and working space for artists and 500 work spaces for artists over the next decade.”⁶⁹ New York City is an art center because of the investments made by the art market itself, art organizations, and the local government. Prioritizing the sustainability and growth of the art market produces options of continual development, and reflects its valued position within the economy of New York City. It functions within a different financial and

⁶⁷ Ibid., 64.

⁶⁸ McCarthy, *The Arts Market*, 65.

⁶⁹ Annie Giraud Voss, Glenn Voss, Brooke Awtry and Jennifer Armstrong, “NCAR Arts Vibrancy Index IV: Hotbeds of America’s Arts and Culture,” *SMU National Center for Arts Research*, 2018: 10.

cultural structure than second-tier cities and periphery art markets as a result of its history and high concentration of people involved in the art-making and selling process.

This “outside looking in” mentality induces an unspoken pressure from the art center that is felt across all echelons of localized art markets, institutions, and communities. Wisconsin based artist and curator Michelle Grabner argues, “...the centers swoop in and say for success you need to have a review in *ArtForum*, for success you need to have a commercial gallery. I find myself getting caught in those same traps.”⁷⁰ This “criteria imposed from the center” as Grabner calls it, places localized art markets in a challenging position of managing both local artistic evaluations and pressure felt from the art center. Grabner continues, “We still have to do the difficult work of creating criteria in which we know how we are succeeding. So we not only have to do the work from another position, we have to develop criteria about how to succeed here, what is working, what is not.”⁷⁰

The inaugural FRONT Triennial in Cleveland, Ohio is an example of Grabner’s argument in establishing and operating within a different set of criteria. It proposed a “new format for biennials and triennials,” focusing on “process, research, collaboration, and long-term engagement with Cleveland and Northeast Ohio.”⁷¹ Concluding in fall 2018, the FRONT Triennial was designed to “be at the cultural forefront,” demonstrating that Cleveland, OH is a platform for supporting local and international contemporary art.⁷² The staff and board of FRONT wanted the art program to be different and engage with the city, its residents and visitors in ways that had long-lasting benefits. Its mission

⁷⁰ Michelle Grabner and Jennifer Kabat, *A Discussion on Regionalism in the Arts*.

⁷¹ “About,” FRONT, Accessed April 12, 2019, <https://frontart.org/about/>.

⁷² Fred Bidwell, “Foreword,” in *FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, An American City*, ed. Michelle Grabner (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2018), 7.

consisted of goals that reflect the potential areas of growth both economically and in arts and culture.⁷³ These are the ‘criteria’ FRONT created for itself to operate within in order to position themselves as a producer of and participant in larger art discourses.

The criticism the triennial underwent, Grabner explains, “...some of the criticism coming from ARTFORUM or Frieze or Art Agenda and these are criteria coming from the center. Critics working for these magazines overlaid what they needed FRONT to be.”⁷⁴ Despite FRONT’s intent to showcase local culture, artists and art institutions, the triennial’s relation to the art center became a focal point. Its significance and effect was assessed by external criteria that positioned it as a resource for the art center.

The “criteria imposed from the center” supplants the significance of *place*, and complicates the conversation of who the art or art event is intended for: the place it immediately resides in, or the larger art world. The art center’s criterion dictates concepts and discourse, presiding over the conditions that separate “periphery” from the “center.” In discussing the outside criticism FRONT received, Grabner expressed an intriguing sentiment, “...we as a center will take care of global discourses, we have that, but Cleveland should be doing something else.”⁷⁴ The notion of “should be doing something else,” demonstrates the art center’s constructed role of categorizing *places*, regions, localities, and determining their artistic jurisdictions in relation to the center. Art centers reinforce the idea of region and the periphery because it supports the current structure of influence. In maintaining “uniqueness” as the center, it remains in the position of producing and accumulating the majority of cultural capital.

⁷³ “About.”

⁷⁴ Michelle Grabner and Jennifer Kabat, *A Discussion on Regionalism in the Arts*.

The resources art centers have, such as art galleries, studios, and museums, serve as a constant draw for artists, which lead to higher concentrations of creative individuals in certain areas. The results of a 2017 analysis of U.S. cities with the densest concentration of artists reveals that they “tend to congregate disproportionately in major metropolitan areas and cultural hubs,” with New York claiming two of the top spots, followed by San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Portland.⁷⁵ International curator Julien Robson writes,

Over the past sixty years the scene in the “Big Apple” has developed into a powerful economic engine of the art world in general and, complemented by the critical appreciation of its internationally distributed art press, it has continued to attract artists from across the globe to live and work there.⁷⁶

The art infrastructure and economy in New York City drives its enduring domestic and international status. Based on the top 40 art fairs around the world, the *International Fair Report 2016* found that New York City, as well as Paris, has the most art fairs yearly, currently at five.⁷⁷ NYC also has the most art galleries present at the top 40 fairs.⁷⁷ Its ubiquitous presence inevitability causes the art world to be dependent upon it as a constant model and source of contemporary art production. The ‘functional attachment’ theory can provide a reasonable explanation to this; it “refers to the ways a place allows us to attain our goals or carry out certain activities.”⁷⁸ Research associated with this theory accentuates the significance of the “cityscape in creating possibilities for place

⁷⁵ Laila Pedro, “Data Suggests Artists More Drawn to Cities than Ever,” *Hyperallergic*, November 16, 2017. <https://hyperallergic.com/412126/data-suggests-artists-more-drawn-to-cities-than-ever/>.

⁷⁶ Robson, “Introducing *here.*,” 12.

⁷⁷ “International Art Fair Report 2016,” *The Art Newspaper*, ed. Emanno Rivetti (U. Allenmandi & Co. Publishing Ltd., 2016), 6-10.

⁷⁸ Convery, Ian, Gerard Corsane, and Peter Davis. *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 4.

dependency,” due to “stronger attachments to place when that place enables them to achieve their personal goals.”⁷⁹

After previously living in London and Berlin Yves Scherer, a mixed-media sculptor and installation artist, “sees New York as the highest-risk, highest-reward city for artists because artists tend to sell more in New York than in Europe.”⁸⁰ Either perceived or experienced, a functional attachment exists in relation to New York City and other art centers. New York City’s identity as the “ideal art capital” has elevated it to a position above the remaining majority of periphery art markets and communities.

A long history of highly concentrated art creation, discourse, and investment makes art centers highly competitive and desirable, especially from the perspective of the periphery. This “tendency for higher-level economic activities such as innovation, design, finance, and media to cluster in a relatively small number of locations” suggests a particular exclusivity that accompanies the accumulation of cultural capital.⁸¹ It goes back to the one-way street metaphor; art center exclusivity derives from the periphery as an incessant contributor to a larger apparatus that does not extensively look beyond itself. The result is the dissemination of art criteria and standards of evaluation that local art markets and communities are pressured to abide by in order to “participate” in the art world.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁰ Andrew Nunes, “Comparing the Costs of Being an Emerging Artist in New York, Los Angeles, and Berlin,” *Artsy*, September 5, 2017, <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-comparing-costs-emerging-artist-new-york-los-angeles-berlin>.

⁸¹ Richard Florida. “Globalization: Part I,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, ed. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016) 284-296.

CHAPTER III

HABITUS AND VISUAL CAPACITY AS PRODUCERS OF PLACE AND LOCAL ART STYLES

The assumptions and initial impression of hearing where someone is from still manages to elicit notable reactions and affects how people are viewed and judged. Unique idioms, accents, and demeanor remain identifiable, and are quickly associated with certain regions and ways of life. Artist statements or interviews are a prime example of this. *Where* an artist is based or where they are *from* is almost always mentioned, provoking a conversation about how that experience impacts their work. In recent years more exhibitions with a regional focus have been organized, reflecting the growing interest in how place and locality remain a unique aspect of the art-making process.⁸² Lucy Lippard explains, “All places exist somewhere between the inside and the outside views of them, the ways in which they compare to, and contrast with, other places.”⁸³ This excerpt emphasizes how place and region are not simply geographic, but subsist under a social structure that is “determined by stories, loyalties, group identity, common experiences and histories, a state of mind rather than a place on a map.”⁸² Pierre Bourdieu’s *Habitus* and Michael Baxandall’s concept of visual capacity collectively explain how an individual’s social and physical surroundings exert influence upon them

⁸² Doss, *Cultural Globalization*, 22.

⁸³ Lippard, *Lure of the Local*, 33-34.

and structure the preferences with which they perceive and interact with the world. From this, “regional art” is analyzed as a reflection of the influence local culture has over the art-making process.

Journalist Dante Chinni and political geographer James Gimpel contribute a visual and more analytical edifice to the notion of region. In *Our Patchwork Nation* they evaluated county statistics and identified twelve communities that exist within the United States.⁸⁴ Based on various elements such as income, religion, age, immigration patterns, population growth, education, ethnicity, and industry, the map formed from the study shows regions emerging from these communities.⁸⁴ Reinforcing the notion that shared perspectives, values, and priorities tend to establish regional enclaves. Chinni and Gimpel write, “Counties are advantageous in a lot of other ways, they are real “places” with their own governments and often their own subcultures.”⁸⁴

Initially created to identify the *why* behind why people typically vote the way they do, *Our Patchwork Nation* also visually quantifies the influence place exerts on how people view and interact with the world. Boom Towns, Tractor Country, Monied ‘Burbs, Industrial Metropolis, Immigration Nation, Campus and Careers are just half of the communities identified and explained in *Our Patchwork Nation*.⁸⁴ The twelve communities provide an initial impression of the different social structures and influences artists, the art making process, and local art market subsist within depending on where they reside. A notable aspect of the map (Fig. 9) is the pattern of the community types commonly comprising urban and rural areas, a stark separation in experienced realities that is echoed in the art world. Tractor Country, Emptying Nests, and Service Worker

⁸⁴ Dante Chinni and James Gimple, *Our Patchwork Nation* (New York: Gotham Books, 2010), 1-13.

Centers tend to represent more rural areas, reflecting the lack in population, diversity, and industry.⁸⁵ Whereas Monied ‘Burbs, Industrial Metropolis, and Boom Towns more commonly represent urban areas, emphasizing the high amounts of diversity, increased income, growth of industry and population.⁸⁵ The divide between rural and urban is not the only identifiable divide that exists in the United States, other societal factors have established highly contrasting ways of life, but in observing how “region” affect artists, rural and urban is the most recognizable and palpable. *Our Patchwork Nation* emphasizes it is not only the physical location, but more importantly the people that cultivate and permeate their way of life. The entrenched local culture establishes a set of conditions that artists either find a way to create and function within or face moving elsewhere.

Pierre Bourdieu provides a theoretical approach to this concept called habitus, which addresses how social structures and the individual interact and influence one another.⁸⁶ It is preceded by his ‘theory of practice,’ which explains that daily, rudimentary actions “contain prior cultural dispositions.”⁸⁷ It goes on to state the types of activities individuals engage in and how they choose to interact with them utilize “different forms of capital.”⁸⁷ Bourdieu claims, “Forms of capital include cultural assets: the ability to ‘consume’ rare objects, such as works of art, might demand skills of taste and appreciation that are derived from family background and/or via institutionalized education.”⁸⁷ For Bourdieu, the cultural capital is highly reflective of social class.⁸⁷ A family’s socioeconomic status and access to education are prominent societal factors that heavily influence the amount of exposure to different resources and experiences.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Chinni and Gimple, *Our Patchwork Nation*, 1-13.

⁸⁶ “Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts,” ed. Michael Grenfell (Durnham, NC: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008), 49-67. <https://www.scribd.com/doc/242649616/199208057-Pierre-Bourdieu-Key-Concepts-pdf>.

⁸⁷ Bridge, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 59-60.

Cultural capital is acquired knowledge; it is a process of accumulating valuable information that an individual utilizes in perceiving and interacting with the world. It is important to note that the concept of cultural capital functions under habitus and is the expression of it.⁸⁸ Furthermore; it “involves the embodied dispositions and resources of habitus that condition bodily movement, tastes and judgments according to class position.”⁸⁸ Moving forward, the theory of habitus as applied to artists and the art-making process will focus on the significance of place-identity rather than specifically class position.

Bourdieu defined habitus as a configuration of social agents, such as individuals, groups, or institutions that comprise a “structured and structuring structure.”⁸⁹ Habitus is “structured by one’s past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences.”⁸⁹ It is “structuring” in that one’s habitus helps shape an individual’s present and future practices. The “structure” comprises a system of dispositions, which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices that utilize an individual’s cultural capital.”⁸⁹ The distinguishing aspects of a habitus rely on the relations between the physical and social spaces people occupy; with the structure of these spaces and the people that occupy these spaces exerting influence upon the other.⁸⁹ The contents of one’s life, although individual, share a structure with others of the same social class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, occupation, nationality, and region because habitus conjoins the social and the individual.⁸⁹ It is a continual interplay of meaning induced by the given environment and the people that enable the established meaning to

⁸⁸ Ibid., 59-60.

⁸⁹ Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*.

reside as the predominant structure of cultural reference. In this way, Bourdieu's habitus encourages thinking relationally.⁹⁰

Referring back to *Our Patchwork Nation*, each of the twelve communities identified represent a distinct habitus. The defining aspects of each community type reveal how the social and physical environments influence each other, constructing a predetermined set of local norms that people are either born into or adjust to over time. The similar social priorities and perspectives of individuals in each community reinforce the presiding local norms, which determines every facet of how the community may continue to grow and change. In observing a region using the habitus approach, one can then ask how art and art making is situated within a particular local culture. In any region or locality, a habitus identifies the cultural and social boundaries a particular population resides and operates within, all presenting opportunities and limitations that must be navigated.

Regional cultures operate according to their own established logic, which depends on the formation of communicational groups and on the processes of transformation of meaning within and among the various groups.⁹¹ Hence, people place value upon the similarities to those in their community, which reinforces a structure of meaning and symbolism specific to that particular area. In *Period Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, Michael Baxandall would describe this as a "period eye," relating the production of art to social history.⁹² He continues on to explain that the viewer brings

⁹⁰ Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*.

⁹¹ Claudio, Lomnitz-Adler, "Concepts for the Study of Regional Culture," *American Ethnologist*, no. 2 (1991): 200.

⁹² Michael Baxandall, *Painting & Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

with them a mass of information and assumptions gathered from their general experience, which they subconsciously employ when observing art.⁹³ Also termed as “visual capacity,” it encapsulates the process of artists creating work articulated to meet the art intellect of the community or region they reside in.⁹³ “Some of the mental equipment a man orders his visual experience with is variable, and much of this variable equipment is culturally relative, in the sense of being determined by the society which has influenced his experience. The painter responds to this; his public’s visual capacity must be his medium.”⁹³ The “experience” and “mental equipment” the excerpt mentions is the result of an individual’s habitus, which is the foundation visual capacity builds and rests upon.

Think of habitus as the house an individual grows up in, the floor plan and interior design shaping how they construct their expectations and preferences of how every house should be. Visual capacity is the result of living in the house, and is the ingrained “culturally relative” preferences exerted on other houses the individual experiences. The house the individual grew up in is limiting because it becomes the standard by which everything else is evaluated, both knowingly and unknowingly.

This metaphor explains the process by which place-based idioms, imagery, and symbols develop, once again emphasizing Baxandall’s argument that the visual capacity of an artist’s public must be his medium.⁹³ In essence, an artist’s creativity, artistic production and style are a derivative of their local market’s expectations and preferences of art.

⁹³ Margaret Dikovitskaya, *Visual Culture: The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

From this, two prominent categories of art styles, “Visceral art” “Reflective art” emerge based on social and economic conditions, further emphasizing the importance of *place*. Visual capacity plays a large part in influencing a predisposition to support either “reflective art,” or “visceral art,” which also relates back to Bourdieu’s concept of ‘cultural capital.’⁹⁴

Based on the common terms “high art” and “popular art,” using “reflective” and “visceral” their place is more precise and addresses the aesthetic focus of each.⁹⁴ Reflective art focuses on depth of content, while visceral art’s focus is immediacy of impact.⁹⁵ Educating and requiring effort to be appreciated motivates reflective art.⁹⁵ As previously mentioned, visceral art is motivated to entertain, which can be interpreted in different ways, and is easily accessible for viewers.⁹⁵ *Building Communities, Not Audiences* explains, “Works emphasizing depth of content challenge the mind and spirit and offer rich rewards for repeat exposure to them. Works emphasizing immediacy of impact are designed to have a profound and immediate effect upon the perceiver.”⁹⁵ Worth noting is these two points of focus are not mutually exclusive, an artwork can possess aspects of both, but the terms identify characteristics of two art practices that often materialize based on spatial economic conditions.⁹⁵ This connection between art practice and economy directly plays into visual capacity and habitus because it identifies patterns in art making that result from specific economic and social environments. It further proves art is reactionary, not just to emotions and experiences, but to the

⁹⁴ Doug Borwick, *Building Communities, Not Audiences: The Future of the Arts in the United States* (Winston-Salem: Arts Engaged, 2012), 19.

⁹⁵ Borwick, *Building Communities, Not Audiences*, 19-20.

conditions of *place*. Art is a unique contradiction of creative autonomy that still operates within preexisting preferences and economic conditions.

Access to art education, professional development opportunities, and the proximity to art museums and galleries determine the perspective a region, locality, or city has regarding the function and value of art. Economist and art historian J. Michael Montias explains:

The size of the artists' community active in any given center or country determines the total number of works of art produced, the extent of specialization among artists, the chances that exceptionally talented individuals will emerge, and the possibility of attaining and preserving a 'critical mass' in the community. Demand affects the contents of works of art, especially the relative importance of different subjects.⁹⁶

Refer to Modernism as introduced with the 1913 Amory Show, and Regionalism, two art movements that historically overlap and originated in a different habitus of urban and rural, respectively. The art being produced in each place represent different localized economies, sources of artistic influence, and local investment. New York City had, and continues to have, many prominent galleries boasting eager art collectors and auction houses, while the areas taken with Regionalism used post office walls and small gallery spaces. Art education opportunities differed as well; New York City offered multiple internationally recognized art programs that drew artists from around the world. Whereas regionalists Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood were responsible for starting some of the first rural art programs, both in higher education institutions and local programs they personally supported.⁹⁷ It is apparent that the presence or absence of art institutions and

⁹⁶ Michael J. Montias, "Cost and Value in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art," *Art History* 10, no. 4, December (1987), 455.

⁹⁷ Kroiz, *Cultivating Citizens*, 205-216.

organizations had a hand in shaping the visual capacity of the local audience. Demand existed differently in each place, resulting in the contrasting art styles intended to serve different means and artistic ideals.

Art education, professional development opportunities, and local arts spending are the main variables that comprise the habitus of a local art market and art community. They are situational and dependent on the choices of local educators, leaders, and residents. The local leadership's relation with the art community determines the arts' position amongst the greater local population and its level of visibility. From this, the visual capacity of a place develops, serving as the structure and source of resources artists have access to and work within.

Art institutions and organizations help establish and facilitate relationships with art, but their sheer existence reflects a local interest and investment in the arts as well. *Building Communities, Not Audiences* makes a similar point, "The widely reported and lamented removal of substantive experiences in the arts from the schools is not merely a shortsighted response of school boards and administrators to budget constraints. It also illuminates a lack of passion about the topic on the part of the bulk of the general public."⁹⁸ Both art centers and the periphery control the amount of arts and culture it supports and in what ways, which is similar to sports. People must find value in sports to find them worth investing in, whether it's a ticket to a game, building a new stadium, or starting a team. The presence of something signifies its value to that local culture.

Educational experiences are a "structuring structure" in an individual's life at any age, facilitating interactions in a pre-planned environment. How experiences or activities

⁹⁸ Borwick, *Building Communities, Not Audiences*, 74.

are presented to an individual and under what circumstances also shapes their relationship with that thing or activity. That is significant because this facet of habitus is allowed a certain amount of power in framing people's dispositions; refer back to Bourdieu's "Theory of Practice."⁹⁹ Educational programs give presence to activities and practices in people's lives, and provide the context necessary to either expand or limit an individual's habitus.

Art education is often the first encounter children have with creative thinking and the visual arts. The curriculum covers the elements of design, color theory, and other strategic approaches to the art making process while establishing a presence of the visual arts in the lives of students. Through this exposure critical engagement takes place, fostering confidence in interpreting artwork. Thus, the less arts education available, such as in rural areas and communities with high levels of poverty, students are growing up with a limited presence or no presence of the arts.¹⁰⁰ As a result, they are more accustomed to not engaging with the arts critically or with curiosity. If the importance of something is never taught or shown, how is it expected to ever change? It's similar to teaching children right from wrong, the only way they know the difference between the two is by being taught, shown, and told why; based off the values and priorities of the people around them. Education provides the why, and without it a community and habitus rarely change because the social and physical structures remain the same as well. The capacity, availability, and quality of art education serves as the foundation for fostering future investment in and support of the arts in local communities.

⁹⁹ Bridge, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 59-60.

¹⁰⁰ Lisa Donovan and Maren Brown, "Leveraging Change: Increasing Access to Arts Education in Rural Areas," *Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts* (2015): 15-32.

The following co-op studio and galleries accentuate the significance of these spaces in fostering growth of local art markets and communities while contributing to the local economy as well. They all welcome and encourage public visitations, offering daily hours of operation, studio visit hours, and special events.

The Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria, Virginia is housed in an old munitions plant boasting eighty-two artist studios, two galleries, and two workshops all under one roof.¹⁰¹ It draws roughly 500,000 visitors each year, and functions as a center for art programming, promotion, and the locus of engagement with art for both locals and tourists.¹⁰¹

The Artist Relocation Program in Paducah, Kentucky, a town with a population of approximately 25,000, is based in a specific neighborhood consisting of historic buildings and notable styles of architecture.¹⁰² After major investments in renovations the Lower Town Arts District, as it has come to be called, features working artist studios and several galleries.¹⁰³ “The highly visible and colorful commercial art district became a quiet creative community. Over twenty artists live and work in Lower Town.”¹⁰³ The Artist Relocation Program has garnered national recognition for its approach and implementation of establishing support and funds for such a project. It was included in *Building Communities, Not Audiences* by Doug Borwick as an example in the chapter titled “Conceptual Framework for Community Engagement.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ “History,” *Torpedo Factory Art Center*, Accessed March 2019, <http://torpedofactory.org/about-us/history/>.

¹⁰² “QuickFacts: Paducah City, Kentucky,” *United States Census Bureau*, Accessed March 1 2019, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/paduahcitykentucky>

¹⁰³ “Lower Town Arts District,” *Paducah Mainstreet*, Accessed March 18, 2019, <http://www.paduhamainstreet.org/lowertown-arts-district.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ Borwick, *Building Communities, Not Audiences*, 40-89.

Mainframe Studios in Des Moines, Iowa began as an initial idea in 2016 by Justin Mandelbaum, whom also co-founded Western Avenue Studios in Lowell, Massachusetts in 2005.¹⁰⁵ The Massachusetts space “serves as a model for other cities seeking successful examples of how supporting the arts leads to economic prosperity for communities.”¹⁰⁵ Mainframe Studios currently has sixty-five artist studios, five arts-related non-profit spaces, and an event rental space.¹⁰⁵ There is a 100+ waitlist for the studio spaces, a testament to the value and utility of creative workspaces designed to meet the needs of artists.¹⁰⁶

Spaces such as these offers a point of access, a gathering place to interact with artists, ask questions, and view artwork with the hope of investing. Visibility is the main intent in establishing spaces for artistic professional development because it also provides a physical existence and tangibility to the local art community. Studio and gallery spaces create a connection of knowing where to find local art. The interactions these physical spaces facilitate become a “structuring structure” of visual capacity. They are able to shape people’s associations and dispositions of art because it is a space where social structures and the individual coincide.

Working studio spaces provide visitors the opportunity to watch the art-making process, inciting a differentiation between art made in local studios and art sold at a department store. This helps with the innate productivity lag of the arts.¹⁰⁷ Other industries have alleviated the “effects of inflation through mechanization and

¹⁰⁵ “Backstory,” *Mainframe Studios*, Accessed March 11, 2019.

<https://mainframestudios.org/about/backstory/>

¹⁰⁶ “Project Update,” *Mainframe Studios*, Accessed March 11, 2019, <https://mainframestudios.org/project-update/>

¹⁰⁷ Borwick, *Building Communities, Not Audiences*, 22.

computerization to improve efficiency” and reduce overall cost.¹⁰⁸ “The arts’ inability to take full advantage of this option results in what economists call productivity lag,” causing the arts to be “more expensive relative to other ‘commodities’.”¹⁰⁸ Access to the process displays the effort put into art making, serving as an explanation and justification for the prices that often make potential buyers wary. Overall, studio and gallery spaces provide an experience, and as the Torpedo Factory Art Center, Artist Relocation Program, and Mainframe Studios show, the more visible local art and artists are, the more interest and investment shown in return.

For example, over the last ten years Des Moines, Iowa, with a population of 65,000, has invested in fostering its art scene to meet the needs of the artists currently living there, and to give them an array of reasons to stay.¹⁰⁹ The city leaders “understood that in order to attract talent, they needed to invest in local arts...the underground artists grew tired of recycling their work for each other and demanded venues, galleries, and respect.”¹¹⁰ It was recognized that resources and adequate creative space was limited, thus limiting artists and their potential to establish studios and networks in Des Moines. This Midwestern city shows how policies and methods of investment produce a particular social structure and environment for local artists to work within. These components shape the possibilities available and the trajectory for growth in arts and culture. In addition, assessing these components identifies the challenges and pressures created by the local culture and economy that artists must navigate. That’s not to say artists do not hold any

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰⁹ “QuickFacts: Des Moines, Iowa,” *United States Census Bureau*, Accessed March, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/westdesmoinescityiowa>

¹¹⁰ Zachary Mannheimer, “Making a Scene in Des Moines,” *SMU Data Arts*, August 31, 2017, <http://mcs.smu.edu/artsresearch2014/AVI17-DesMoines2>.

influence over the habitus and visual capacity where they reside, but as curator Hesse McGraw comments, “What are the necessary conditions for an artist to sustain his or her practice largely outside the market?” He goes on to argue, “I don’t think we’ve reached a point where, within academia or within non-profit artist support models, we’re able to adequately recognize the unique market pressures or “lack-of-market” pressures that exist for artists living in the Midwest.”¹¹¹ This refers to Michelle Grabner’s point of art centers producing “criteria” that periphery art markets feel pressured to ascribe, despite having their own localized needs and challenges.¹¹²

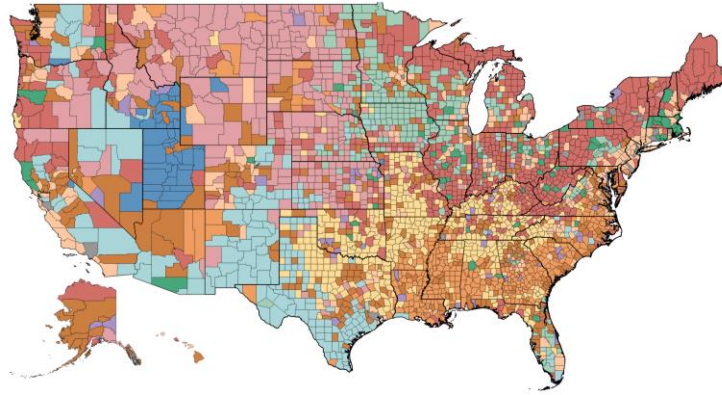
Bourdieu’s habitus and Baxandall’s visual capacity focus on thinking relationally, explaining how meaning, symbols, and idioms according to place develop. Based on the social and physical surroundings of an individual, their experiences within these spaces shape and influence their general disposition. This determines the “perceptions, appreciations and practices” with which an individual perceives and interacts with the world.¹¹³ The theoretical approaches prove that place is a complex nebula of interrelations between an individual, those that comprise their immediate local, and the physical environment. This enables the observation of the influence and effect habitus and visual capacity exude on local artists. Artistic style, subject matter, and context can then be interpreted not just as a visual representation of place, but a social, economic, and environmental one as well.

¹¹¹ “Trespassers: A Conversation with Christopher Cook and Hesse McGraw,” in *Here.*, (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2011), 29-36.

¹¹² Grabner and Kabat, *A Discussion on Regionalism in the Arts*.

¹¹³ Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, 51.

Fig. 9 *Community Types* by Our Patchwork Nation. 2010.
<http://www.patchworknation.org/regions-page>.



CHAPTER IV

SOUTH DAKOTA AS A CASE STUDY OF HABITUS AND VISUAL CAPACITY

South Dakota will be used to demonstrate the implications of habitus and visual capacity by analyzing prominent South Dakota artists as well as the physical, social and economic structures that comprise and influence its habitus and visual capacity. The style and subject matter of artists Harvey Dunn (1884-1952), Terry Redlin (1938-2016) and Dorothy Morgan (b. 1951-) will be analyzed, and an example outside of South Dakota will be included as point of comparison.

South Dakota's low population density and lack of proximity to an art center makes it an effective example from the periphery of the art world. The state's population is roughly 885,000 with a population density of 10.7 people per square mile, making it the 46th most densely populated U.S. state.¹¹⁴ The largest city is Sioux Falls with a population of 170, 000, and the state's median household income is \$54,126.¹¹⁴ Sharing borders with Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming makes it a land locked state in the Great Plains. According to the *Our Patchwork Nation* map: Tractor Country, and Emptying Nests make up the majority of the state's community identities.¹¹⁵ Agriculture is the largest industry in South Dakota, with over 19 million

¹¹⁴ "QuickFacts: South Dakota," *United States Census Bureau*, Accessed March, 1 2019. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sd>.

¹¹⁵ Dante Chinni and James Gimple, "Community Types," *Patchwork Nation*, <http://www.patchworknation.org/regions-page>.

acres of cropland and 23 million acres of pastureland, producing an economic impact of \$25.6 billion each year.¹¹⁶ Thus, agriculture has created a localized economy that facilitates the growth of other industries due to demand, and upon which many people rely for their livelihood. Due to the famous faces of Mount Rushmore, located in the Black Hills, tourism contributes \$2 billion each year to the state's economy.¹¹⁷ Combines, silos, and harvest season have become trophies on the mantel of South Dakota culture; they are symbols of success and stability. The prominence of the agriculture industry, low population and proximity to art centers has established social structures that do not facilitate the same influence of art culture as in other regions.

Harvey Dunn was an active painter during the American Scene Painting movement, nationally known for his artistic documentation of prairie life.¹¹⁸ During the height of the Regionalism art movement Dunn was in his mid-forties. First attending South Dakota Agricultural College, he continued his studies at the Chicago Art Institute and was one of eight illustrators chosen as an artist for the American Expeditionary Forces during WWI.¹¹⁸ "Dunn's works are nationally regarded not only for their contribution to American illustration, but more specifically, to its documentation of the emotion of the early prairie life."¹¹⁸ *The Prairie is My Garden* (Fig. 10) is his most celebrated work; it depicts a woman in the midst of the vast landscape she relies on, with her farmhouse off in the distance. The title speaks to the land's utility as seen by farmers,

¹¹⁶ "South Dakota Agriculture-Facts & Impact," *South Dakota Department of Agriculture*, last modified 2012, <https://sdda.sd.gov/office-of-the-secretary/agriculture-industry/>.

¹¹⁷ Katlyn Richter, "Tourism Industry Posts Gains in 2017," *South Dakota Department of Tourism*, January 19, 2018, <https://www.travelsouthdakota.com/newsroom/press-releases/tourism-news-releases/Tourism-Industry-Posts-Gains-2017>.

¹¹⁸ "Harvey Dunn Biography," *South Dakota Art Museum: Harvey Dunn Collection*, Accessed March 1, 2019, <https://www.sdstate.edu/south-dakota-art-museum/harvey-dunn-collection>.

their “garden” being comprised of crops such as corn and soybeans. Dunn’s stylized realism adds a soft element to the reality his narratives are based on. The color palette echoes Benton’s; the warm and vibrant natural hues romanticize the harsh elements that the Great Plains actually poses. Dunn’s prolific career centers around this archetype of rural living, establishing visual association and symbolism with the recurring landscape and agricultural structures. “He clarifies our relationship with the land,” Lynn Verschoor, Director of the South Dakota Art Museum stated, “It’s something you would hang in your home.”¹¹⁹ The South Dakota Art Museum in Brookings, SD was built explicitly to exhibit and maintain the Harvey Dunn Collection, consisting of 144 paintings, prints, and drawings.¹²⁰

Terry Redlin, another distinguished South Dakota artist, is renowned for his wildlife paintings.¹²¹ More than three million people have visited the Redlin Art Center in Watertown, SD since it’s opening in 1997.¹²¹ He grew up during the end of the Great Depression on a family farm, and later attended St. Paul School of Associated Arts in Minneapolis, Minnesota studying graphic design and layout.¹²²

Rich, colorful sunsets, impeccable detail, and the mastery of oil paint encompass the iconic style of Redlin’s narrative scenes commemorating South Dakota’s rural past.

One of his most famous paintings, *Best Friends* (1989) (Fig. 11) positions a warm sunset

¹¹⁹ Dorene Weinstein, “Art: Complete Harvey Dunn Collection on Display at SDSU,” *Argus Leader*, November 1, 2014, Accessed December 02, 2017, <http://www.argusleader.com/story/life/2014/11/02/art-complete-harvey-dunn-collection-display-sdsu/18195213/>.

¹²⁰ “Harvey Dunn Biography.”

¹²¹ Pat Pheifer, “South Dakota wildlife artist Terry Redlin dies at 78,” *Star Tribune*, April 25, 2016. <http://www.startribune.com/south-dakota-wildlife-artist-terry-redlin-dead-at-78/377020991/>.

¹²² “About Terry: 1937-2016,” *Terry Redlin and the Redlin Art Center*, Accessed March 11, 2019. <https://redlinart.com/about-terry>.

as the main focal point as a hunter and their dog observe the expansive landscape. The truck with a canoe strapped on top implies waterfowl hunting, a popular South Dakota recreational sport. The saturated earth tones and perfectly captured light evoke moments of familiarity and nostalgia in Redlin's paintings. He genuinely loved the life behind his visual narratives, stating, "America's rural past, in my eyes, was a wonderful place full of both beauty and opportunity."¹²³ Barns, farmhouses, Midwest wildlife, numerous trees, and a landscape perspective were the repeated symbols of agriculture and rural living employed by Redlin. His stylized realism resonates with people, leading U.S. ART Magazine to name him "America's Most Popular Artist" every year from 1991-1998.¹²⁴ In regard to Redlin's passing in 2016 Governor Dennis Daugaard commented, "For many South Dakotans, Terry's work brought to life our fondest memories of our state's outdoor heritage and rural roots."¹²⁴

The styles of these artists are reminiscent of artwork produced during the Regionalism art movement because of how it engages with the local audience. As expressed by director Lynn Verschoor and Governor Daugaard, Dunn and Redlin's artwork is relatable and recognizable. The repetitive imagery and themes are lived experiences that are representative of what is prioritized and reinforced in South Dakota culture. Their artwork tells the stories of people living there with comfortable narratives and imagery. Similar to the role WPA murals played during the Great Depression, Dunn and Redlin show mastery of technique with the intent of visual enjoyment for and connection to the viewer.

¹²³ "About Terry: 1937-2016."

¹²⁴ Pheifer, "South Dakota wildlife artist."

The repetitive use of rural landscape themes and compositions by the two artists are evidence of a visual capacity specific to South Dakota. Consider *Evening Surprise* (1983) (Fig. 12) by Terry Redlin as another example. Once again a sunset is the source of rich color and light, as the bright orange contrasts with the dark blue-grey of the clouds above. Pheasants, South Dakota's state bird and popular hunting game, take flight across the painting in the passing of a combine. In one painting the prominent industries of this region can be gauged: farming and hunting. A romanticized relationship with the land and wildlife is repeatedly presented, the narrative always familiar and celebratory. "His work is the equivalent of 'comfort food,' in this case, comfort art, and it imbues us with a sense of well-being," writes Larry Jordan in *Midwest Today*.¹²⁵ The relationship viewers often have with Redlin's artwork is visceral, meaning it is motivated to entertain and is easily accessible for viewers.¹²⁶ Entertaining in this case is a sense of kinship with the imagery and narrative being depicted. The argument is not whether Terry Redlin is a "good" artist or not, but what his stylistic realism and common visual archetypes say about South Dakota's relationship with art.

Conversations surrounding an artist or artwork point to larger structures of social behavior and cultural capital. The perspective through which people process and evaluate the world around them is vocalized through dialogue and made known. Word choice is effective in discerning meaning because it draws upon symbolism and associations with value established by localized vernacular. In describing Harvey Dunns' artwork, Lynn Verschoor stated, "It's something you would hang in your home."¹²⁷ Larry Jordan labeled

¹²⁵ Larry Jordan, "Terry Redlin: America's Most Popular Artist," *Midwest Today*, Panora: December 1999, <http://www.midtod.com/redlin.phtml>.

¹²⁶ Borwick, *Building Communities, Not Audiences*, 19.

¹²⁷ Weinstein, *Art: Complete Harvey Dunn Collection*.

Terry Redlin's work as "comfort art," and also commented, "Redlin has sold millions of paintings, often to people who don't ordinarily buy art, and earned a place in living rooms and boardrooms alike."¹²⁸ What can be teased from these excerpts are terms that assign value to Dunn and Redlin's artwork based on the visual capacity of the audience it primarily reaches. A particular emphasis on *where* the artwork resides, such as the home or living room equates value with its ability to assume a passive position within a space. It is visceral, with the intent to be enjoyed and also function as decor.

Dorothy Morgan (b. 1951-) studied art at South Dakota State University and is described as "a mid-career artist who is considered one of the Midwest's finest and most accomplished painters."¹²⁹ Using thick impasto Morgan paints the South Dakota environment; the landscapes complete with an expansive sky and horizon line, which draws a similarity to both Dunn and Redlin. *Last Light, March* (2016) (Fig. 13) and *Early Morning Color, December* (2002) (Fig. 14) illustrate this compositional style. Her paintings are void of figures, emphasizing the solitude and expanses of land that remain undisturbed. The stillness emanates from her paintings, coming from a very personal place and life experience. The stylized realism has a slight gestural element to it due to the heavy texture of the paint, as in *Grass, Road, Trees, Late Summer* (2016) (Fig. 15). As with Redlin, light is an important aspect of Morgan's painting style in order to capture the dramatic lighting wide-open spaces provide. The titles of her work often give the season and time of day it is based on, a nod to how time and the season factor into the projected light and color upon the landscape.

¹²⁸ Jordan, *Terry Redlin: America's Most Popular Artist*.

¹²⁹ "Dorothy Morgan," *John Pence Gallery*, Accessed April 3, 2019.
<http://johnpence.com/visuals/painters/morgan/index.htm>.

Morgan's artwork reiterates the relationship with the land as previously discussed with Dunn and Redlin. The repetitive imagery is derived from a specific association with place and its environment symbols: trees in a shelterbelt formation, a flat patch or field of land, and lots of sky with few clouds. The stylized realism of her work, is intended to evoke familiarity for the viewer, it's intent is to capture the *sense of place*.

Upon examining the artwork of Dunn, Redlin, and Morgan, it is apparent that there is a pattern in style and subject matter. Realism, depicting subject matter and landscapes devoid of any embellishments and as realistic as possible, is a common style approach. The imagery is easy to comprehend, and the recurring visual symbols only make the artwork more relatable and recognizable. Farmhouses, Midwest wildlife, agriculture, and spacious landscapes, just to name a few. These visual clues indicate a collective preference of art subject and style for the general South Dakota public. As previously mentioned, artists can serve as a visual language for reading place. What can be deduced about the consistency of subject matter and style of prominent South Dakota art when compared to art made in New York City or Chicago? It shows that places interact with art differently; they have different preferences and systems of determining artistic value based on preexisting social, economic, and physical structures. They want art to do different things, as well as serve different purposes.

The 7 Artists & Friends Gallery in Key West, Florida is a case study that juxtaposes South Dakota in local art style and symbolic subject matter. The gallery exhibits nearly 100% local art, and is an effective example because its geographic seclusion until the early twentieth Century, when the Overseas Highway was built,

perpetuated a particular local culture and way of life.¹³⁰ Tourism has grown in popularity, but the Florida Keys and Key West residents that have lived the majority or all of their lives there are dedicated to the continuous preservation of local culture.

Island Time (Fig. 16) and *Right On Beach* (Fig. 17) by Pam Hobbs clearly convey a style that juxtaposes the artwork of Dunn and Redlin. It is more of a color-blocked realism; the complimentary house colors only add to the eccentricity. The works possess a whimsical and exaggerated element due to the saturated color palette and altered proportions of the buildings. The lack of mid-range tones eliminates detailed texture from all subjects in the paintings. Hobbs' whimsical nature and bold colors match *Duval and Greene* (Fig. 18) by Martha dePoo and *Lazy Way Key West* (Fig. 19) by Karen Beauprie, which demonstrate the prevalent style local Florida Keys artists utilize. In addressing style first, the works incorporate the bold, bright colors that exist throughout the Florida Keys, and not just with houses but the majority of buildings. It is a cornerstone of the Florida Keys visual culture, and a definite symbol of place. Especially with the work of dePoo and Beauprie, a watercolor effect with loose brushwork conveys a stylized realism that encompasses the laidback lifestyle residents of the Florida Keys embrace. The works also possess an essence of ongoing movement within compact compositions; the entire picture plane is filled with multiple buildings or various subjects.

Another stylistic component is the specific creation of depth in the paintings. Both dePoo and Beauprie layer buildings in the middle ground, and foreground to establish depth, then use flat washes in the background and sky. The visual depth of the buildings

¹³⁰ "The Highway That Goes to Sea," *The Florida Keys & Key West*.
<https://fla-keys.com/the-highway-that-goes-to-sea/>.

hit the flatness of the backdrop, pushing the narrative forward visually. The focus is on the foreground and the immediate subjects in this space, emphasizing the significance of the buildings and the specific “sense of place” the Florida Keys possesses. Compare this to Dunn, Redlin, and Morgan’s use of visual depth. Emphasis is on the breadth of space in their paintings, the background, foreground, and middle ground all equally engaged in telling the intended narrative. *Dakota Woman* (Fig. 20) by Harvey Dunn is an example of this, the visual isolation of the woman, and the amount of space between her and the farmhouse in the distance. The intricate detailing of the farmhouse and the land itself engages it with the main subject, tying them together in a narrative regarding space, landscape, and lifestyle. Morgan’s *Last Light, March* (2016) showcases a vast amount of visual depth using high contrast and an emphasis of a distanced horizon line. The bright colors of the fading sunset offset the dark hues of the horizon line, making it a visual focal point.

Autumn Evening (1991) (Fig. 21) by Terry Redlin speaks to the same use of space, only with more buildings and trees in the foreground. The picture plane of this piece is busier, which can be compared to the works of dePoo and Beuprie more directly. Despite more subjects in the painting, and less of the sky showing, there is still evident negative space around and amongst the buildings and subjects. The detail and illuminated windows of the house off to the right creates the detailed depth that activates the background as part of the visual narrative. The visual cohesion of Dunn and Redlin’s paintings is very atmospheric; whereas Hobbs, dePoo, and Beuprie’s visual cohesion is derived from the tight cropping of space with a full picture plane.

The art made in South Dakota and the Florida Keys reveal how the lived experience of place “saturates the work of the artist.”¹³¹ Observing artwork made in different places is a reminder of how the local culture establishes a structure of meaning and symbolism that artists draw from and are influenced by. The local is romanticized in a distinct style, conveyed through color palette, brushwork, and visual content. What makes these works different from each other is what makes them local to the lifestyles they are depicting.

Art education availability, professional development opportunities, and local spending contribute to the formulation of the local artist’s circumstance and the visual capacity of South Dakota residents. The *2017 South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report* will be referenced throughout to identify and examine the particulars of each component.¹³² The focus is on the social, economic and physical structures that shape the individual’s and overall community’s relationship with art. “It is not enough to employ the artist. He must have an audience to absorb his work, and the development of an intelligent, receptive, and critical audience is an important panacea [solution], for it is on this informed and active public that the cultural future of America rests.”¹³³ The essence of this 1937 *Art News Annual* excerpt remains relevant because it emphasizes the significant role the local audience has over the course of an artist’s career.¹³⁴

In less populated, more rural areas, art education is at a greater risk of not being offered, of high quality or consistently funded. This directly impacts how children develop a connotation with art making, interpretation, and assigning it value. A statewide

¹³¹ Robson, “Introducing *Here*,” 13.

¹³² Craig Dreeszen, *2017 South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report*.

¹³³ Martha Davidson, *WPA Art Marches On: Federal Patronage Justifies Itself*, 143.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

coalition of education partners, Illinois Creates, found “students in rural areas tend to receive the least amount of arts education, and arts education levels are lower in rural districts regardless of socioeconomic indicators, level of social problems or dominant race of students.”¹³⁵

Constrained financial resources, unfavorable arts policy, and transportation issues are noted as the more prominent challenges facing rural areas in providing equitable arts education.¹³⁶ The arts do not undergo standardized testing as compared to other areas of study, which only contributes to being first on the chopping block when it comes to the school budget. The constant revisiting of arts education’s value in schools feeds into the notion that the arts are disposable because they seem like a choice instead of a necessity.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, over half of South Dakota’s public elementary and secondary schools are designated as rural at 76.9%, making the majority of students in this state face the likelihood of no art education or limited access to it.¹³⁷ As a result, the prominent challenges of more rural areas persist on a larger scale. The 2017 *South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report* found “the largest proportion, about 34% of respondents, thought equitable access to K12 art education had declined over the past five years.”¹³⁸ The respondents were comprised of educators, teaching artists, or family members of a K-12 student.¹³⁸ Although the presumed reasons for the decline were not listed in detail, the finding shows that art education in South Dakota is not stable. There is a growing disparity in access driven by location and the availability of public programs to supplement nonexistent or inadequate art education.

¹³⁵ Donovan and Brown, *Leveraging Change*, 16.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 17.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹³⁸ Dresszen, *2017 South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report*, 5.

Out of students enrolled in private arts instruction, 32% stated it replaces missing in-school arts education, and 30% stated it supplements inadequate in-school arts education.¹³⁹ For example, in the Yankton, South Dakota school district the National Endowment for the Arts funds the Art Adventure program where retired teachers facilitate quality art classes in elementary schools that have no art teachers.¹⁴⁰ Programs such as Art Adventure point to the structure of South Dakota's habitus because it determines how students interact with the arts and in what capacity.

Professional development opportunities for South Dakota artists echo the difficulties art education faces, which only reinforces the identifiable factors that affect the existence of the arts according to place. These factors, such as the amount of funding, resources, and visibility can be compared and contrasted between places because they are based on social and physical structures; they are based on elements of habitus that produce visual capacity.

In looking at the 2017 *South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report* once again, the primary markets for South Dakota artists show, "Over half of responding artists (52%), indicate their primary audience was a mix of in-state and out-of-state customers."¹⁴¹ Only 38% of respondents predominantly serve local and South Dakota audiences.¹⁴¹ Although producing art with a broader audience in mind is an effective strategy, the numbers indicate a lack of local market support. This also places more reliance on tourism for income because the local audience investing in art is not

¹³⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴⁰ Shauna, Marlette, "Officials: Cuts to Arts Would Hurt SD Economy," *Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan*, February 1, 2017. https://www.yankton.net/community/article_d31ef7c6-e900-11e6-83ba-4bad4fe8f7d0.html.

¹⁴¹ Dresszen, 2017 *South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report*, 7-8.

consistent or visible. It is not as lucrative which explains 92% of respondents listing access to grant funding as a primary need for artists, followed by 88% with the need for increase in sales.¹⁴¹ For the majority of South Dakota artists, creating artwork is not their primary occupation; it is often paired with something else, such as teaching.

The culmination of these factors lead to 90% of artists surveyed determining validation/recognition of their work as an important need. South Dakota art organizations echo this sentiment: 48% of art organization respondents cited “public awareness, the challenge of awareness of and appreciation for the arts” as a concern.¹⁴² While the statistics can be interpreted subjectively, they also point to how the preceding numbers of who comprises the primary audience, and the need for increased funding contribute to this overwhelming response. A *States of Engagement* study by the National Endowment for the Arts found that the art museum and gallery attendance rate in South Dakota ranges from 8-14 percent, as compared to the national rate of 21%.¹⁴³ Although South Dakota has a lower population than the majority of the United States, this statistic exemplifies that the overall support for the arts is below the national rate, imparting the obstacle of garnering visual exposure and enough support to establish an art career. It emphasizes the position of artists and organizations in relation to the rest of their local community, and the challenge of engaging local audiences.

Limited space for promoting visibility of artwork and the art-making process contributes to a lack of professional development opportunities for artists. As a result, the actuality of artist as a profession is less visible, which points to the 90% of South Dakota

¹⁴² Ibid., 7-10.

¹⁴³ “Sample Findings: Performing Arts Attendance by State,” *National Endowment for the Arts*, 2012. <https://www.arts.gov/artistic-fields/research-analysis/arts-data-profiles/arts-data-profile-5/sample-findings>.

artists stating validation for their work as an important need.¹⁴⁴ 87% of artist respondents also listed access to exhibition space as an important need, as well as 64% for affordable studio/workplace, and 87% for more opportunities to network.¹⁴⁴ Essentially, they are asking for more spaces and options through which to increase visibility and promotion of their artwork and art practice.

South Dakota's case study demonstrates the direct cause and affect the structures of habitus have on influencing the dispositions of artists and the local audience. Note once again that visual capacity is the product of these exchanges, and is the subconscious mental frame that art is evaluated against. In referencing the *South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report* the cause and affect aspect becomes more apparent as artists and art organizations are able to specify issues, determine reasoning, and desired solutions as a result of their experiences.

¹⁴⁴ Dresszen, 2017 *South Dakota Arts Constituent Survey Report*, 7-10.

Fig. 10 *Prairie is My Garden* by Harvey Dunn. South Dakota Art Museum, Brookings, SD.

<https://www.southdakotamagazine.com/ten-south-dakota-paintings>



Fig. 11 *Best Friends* by Terry Redlin. 1989. The Redlin Art Center, Watertown, SD.

<https://redlinart.com/collection/best-friends>.



Fig. 12 *Evening Surprise* by Terry Redlin. 1983 The Redlin Art Center, Watertown, SD.

<https://redlinart.com/collection/evening-surprise>.



Fig. 13 *Last Light, March* by Dorothy Morgan. Oil on Panel. 2016. *John Pence Gallery*.

<http://johnpence.com/visuals/painters/morgan/lastlight.htm>.



Fig. 14 *Early Morning Color, December* by Dorothy Morgan. Oil on Panel. 2002. *John Pence Gallery*.

<http://johnpence.com/visuals/painters/morgan/early.htm>



Fig. 15 *Grass, Road, Trees, Late Summer* by Dorothy Morgan. Oil on Panel. 2016. *John Pence Gallery*.

<http://johnpence.com/visuals/painters/morgan/grass.htm>



Fig. 16 *Island Time* by Pam Hobbs. 7 Artists & Friends Gallery. Key West, FL.

<https://7artistskw.com/Island-Time-ph-islandtime-orig.htm>



Fig. 17 *Right On Beach* by Pam Hobbs.
Giclee on canvas with Custom Frame. 7
Artists & Friends Gallery. Key West, FL.
<https://7artistskw.com/Right-On-Beach-ph-rightonbeach.htm>



Fig. 18 *Duval and Greene* by Martha dePoo. Watercolor. 7 Artists & Friends Gallery. Key West, FL.
<https://7artistskw.com/Duval-and-Greene-mdp-dandg.htm>

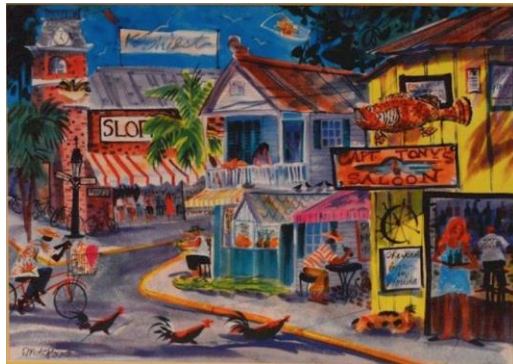


Fig. 19 *Lazy Way Key West* by Karen Beauprie. Watercolor Frame. 7 Artists & Friends Gallery. Key West, FL.
<https://7artistskw.com/Lazy-Way-Key-West-kb-b186.htm>



Fig. 20 *Dakota Woman* by Harvey Dunn.
Dakota Discovery Museum, Mitchell, SD.
<https://www.southdakotamagazine.com/ten-south-dakota-paintings>.



Fig. 21 *Autumn Evening* by Terry Redlin. 1991.
The Redlin Art Center. Watertown, SD.
<https://redlinart.com/collection/autumn-evening>.



CHAPTER V

THE LOCAL IN A CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL

Despite “Globalism” being an ongoing buzzword, a concrete definition remains elusive. But its affect on commerce and communication is easily recognizable, contributing to the flattening of informational hierarchies and expanding mediums of communication. According to sociologist Noah Eisenstadt the existence of a single modernity has been replaced with “multiple modernities.”¹⁴⁵ The visibility created by television, Internet, and social media has enabled an unprecedented awareness of other cultures and societies. The network globalization has created economically, militarily, and politically requires a level of engagement and interest with the world in order to continue supporting it. Although these intricate networks subsist beyond physical boundaries, states and nations as seen on a map still produce meaning and culture particular to groups of people. This presents a significant question for the art world: how does the local in a contemporary global persist, and what does it look like? With respect to the United States, the local persists due to its own interest in maintaining identity of place, and the revisiting of the local through expanding locations of art fairs, exhibitions and biennials.

¹⁴⁵ Zentrum Für Kunst Und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, *The Global Contemporary*, 18.

Art fairs typically take place annually, and involve galleries promoting artists they represent with the objective of selling artwork. It is found that almost half of all gallery sales are now done at fairs, which is up 16% from 2010.¹⁴⁶ Biennials are large-scale international exhibitions that happen every two years, such as the Venice Biennale in Italy. The time in-between exhibitions are determined by the host city or location, meaning they do not have to only take place every two years. For example, every five years the international exhibition Documenta is held in Germany. The value of these international art events is in the gathering of curators, critics, and artists from across the globe to experience alternative art-making processes and art discourse.

These forms of art events illustrate a globalizing art world. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, as new forms of technology emerged such as telephones and cars, the argument that “technological progress has eroded the economic significance of physical location” has been ongoing.¹⁴⁷ Technology is considered the “great leveler,” creating access and connections that are not dependent on location or distance.”¹⁴⁷ From a financial standpoint, a global economy developed derived from neoliberalism, which simply put, “promotes privatized and competitive free-markets.”¹⁴⁸ A full explanation of the development and articulation of the neoliberal global economy is beyond the scope of this study, however, it is important to note the premise of the current market and how the monetization of culture, politics, etc., has formed the current state of the local in a contemporary global.

¹⁴⁶ Olav Velthuis, “A New Art Season, a New Test of Survival,” *New York Times*, September 18, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/opinion/art-fairs-are-hurting-the-art-world.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Richard Florida, “Globalization: Part I,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, ed. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 283.

¹⁴⁸ Emily Gilbert, “Globalization: Part II,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, ed. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 300.

A main concern with globalization is it being a reductive process of culture, eventually producing a standardized aesthetic and nullifying distinctions of place and culture. The presence of a McDonald's or Wal-Mart from the largest cities to the smallest remote areas is an aspect of globalization in generating commonalities of options and experiences. "Global sense of place" was coined by Doreen Massey "to capture the ways that a single site comprises a complex hybrid of layered and interconnected relations."¹⁴⁹ Essentially, the global layered on the preexisting local. The visual landscape now consists of global franchises alongside local businesses, both competing in a multi-tiered, interconnected market. Despite the global economy, local economies varying in size, activity, and strength still exist, which affects their ability to compete in different markets. Harvard psychologist David Gilbert provides a more interpretive description of globalization, "Americans...marinating in memories that happened everywhere but not somewhere, reliving experiences that are located in time but dislocated in space."¹⁵⁰ This excerpt reiterates the argument that physical place becomes trivial in the era of globalism when culture, money, industry, etc. can be produced through digital interconnection.

Globalism underlies the revisiting of the local, as David Harvey explains, "Place-bound identities become more rather than less important in a world of diminishing spatial barriers to exchange, movement, and communication."¹⁵¹ Place-identity is based on three principles: "distinctiveness, (the way people use place to distinguish themselves from others); continuity (concept of self preserved over time, places allow a sense of

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 302.

¹⁵⁰ Steven Heolscher, "Place: Part II," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, ed. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 246.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 249.

continuity throughout the life course); and self-esteem (using a place to create a positive evaluation of yourself).”¹⁵²

The three principles focus on how the individual constructs their sense of self and disposition in relation to their immediate environment.¹⁵² This process of comparison and evaluation is derived from habitus because meaning is extracted from it, as it leads to conclusions about the self resulting from interactions with physical and social structures. As previously expounded upon, this creates a strong tie between a person and place.

Globalism obscures place-identity because it forces the insular building and exchanging of local experiences, priorities, and values to engage in a larger, global community. From which the notion of “multiple modernities” arises as mentioned by sociologist Noah Eisenstadt.¹⁵³ Due to globalization ‘modern’ or ‘modernity’ is no longer perceived as a singular concept but a relative concept that happens concurrently. “The global is no longer synonymous with the totalizing term *world*. It denotes the space of a ‘multiplicity of worlds’ in societies and cultures at large.”¹⁵⁴ It hinges on the global awareness of other art-making practices and forms of culture production. A multiplicity of art worlds has begun to supplant one unitary art world, meaning the center-periphery model as previously expounded upon is shifting.¹⁵⁵

For instance, the rise of social media platforms has led to artists also having a digital identity and presence. Artwork can be promoted online, and artists can interact

¹⁵² Convery, *Making Sense of Place*, 3.

¹⁵³ Zentrum Für Kunst Und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, *The Global Contemporary*, 18.

¹⁵⁴ Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg, “From Art World to Art Worlds,” in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, eds. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM/Center for Art and Media, 2013), 28.

¹⁵⁵ Hans Belting, “The Plurality of Art Worlds and the New Museum,” in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, eds. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM/Center for Art and Media, 2013), 247.

with art discourse beyond their immediate community. This becomes an additional adapting and preparing of artwork to exist in two different spheres of evaluation: essentially the ‘digital’ or online realm, and the physical local. These conversations and spaces of sharing are happening in a suspended ‘digital modernity’ that exists parallel to the modernity of the physical, geographic, and place-based.

The driving elements of globalization, “spatial flows of capital and information,” incite action to preserve and reinforce local culture.¹⁵⁶ The potential of losing the “sense of place” makes inhabitants recognize what the local or regional culture is by also defining what it is not. Thus, globalization is the local’s foil from which it can discern its particular attributes, strengths, weaknesses, culture, and identity. In an indirect way it perpetuates place-identity. As curator Hesse McGraw shared, “The states of the Midwest are retaining individual identities because of their citizens’ will to do so.”¹⁵⁷

In 2015 Asheville, North Carolina faced the opening of Anthropologie, a popular chain brand-clothing store, in its bustling downtown location.¹⁵⁸ Known for its various local shops, eateries, and art galleries, owners of downtown locations and other supporters organized the UnChain Asheville movement to push back against the presence of Anthropologie and other chain stores in the downtown area.¹⁵⁸ David Sanders, an Asheville downtown shop owner stated, “We don’t want to emerge into a post-apocalyptic chain store scenario.”¹⁵⁸ He further elaborated that “he never wants to walk down a street in Asheville and feel like he could be somewhere else: homogeneous

¹⁵⁶ Heolscher, *Place: Part II*, 249.

¹⁵⁷ *Trespassers: A Conversation*, 34.

¹⁵⁸ Able Allen, “UnChain Asheville Movement Pushes Back as Anthropologie Opens for Business,” *Mountain Xpress*, November 22, 2015. <https://mountainx.com/news/unchain-asheville-movement-pushes-back-as-anthropologie-opens-for-business/>.

reiterations of the store fronts in hundreds of other towns.”¹⁵⁹ In working to keep Asheville “unique and local” the UnChain movement members recognized aspects of their local culture that makes it that way, and what defines the overall “sense of place.”¹⁵⁹ When faced with external influences implementing change to the local landscape and culture, the residents acted in order to minimize its effect and presence. They acted on preserving the place-identity they had established individually and collectively. Moving forward the local in the contemporary global is in a position of navigating between restricting globalization and engaging with it. This precariousness is due to the undeniable advantages it provides, yet remains unpredictable in the full extent of its effects whether positive or negative, short-term or long-term.

The local in a contemporary global is the promotion and selling of local, place-based experiences that cannot be easily replicated. Increased access to information, mobility, and the fear of potential homogenization has lead to cities procuring an individual identity within their host state and becoming a brand of unique experiences and opportunities. Carolyn Cartier explains, “City governments now develop media-oriented profiles through entrepreneurial “branding” exercises as platforms for advancing urban competitiveness.”¹⁶⁰ This makes them a viable destination, as well as a facilitator and producer of culture. City websites promote a specific voice, such as Kansas City’s “Welcome to the New Midwest,”¹⁶¹ “Meet Minneapolis: City by Nature,”¹⁶² “Denver:

¹⁵⁹ Able Allen, *UnChain Asheville Movement Pushes Back as Anthropologie Opens for Business*.

¹⁶⁰ Carolyn Cartier, “World Cities: Part I,” in in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, ed. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 320.

¹⁶¹ “It All Starts Here,” *Visit KC*, March 16, 2019, Accessed April 1, 2019.

<https://www.visitkc.com/newmidwest#sm.0001dirh5helgd8trxe2gtxkiobgs>.

¹⁶² “You’ve Never Met A Place Quite Like This,” *Meet Minneapolis*, Accessed April 1, 2019.

<https://www.minneapolis.org/>.

The Mile High City,”¹⁶³ or Fargo, North Dakota’s tagline, “North of Normal.”¹⁶⁴ This points to the response Asheville locals had to the opening of chain stores in the downtown area. The chain stores disrupt Asheville’s brand of being “unique and local,” derived from an assessment of place-identity, local culture and capitalizing on it.¹⁶⁵ Sense of place is now a brand-making tactic; aspects of the place-identity principles are utilized to tease out lived experiences that can comprise local identity and culture for global consumption.

In recent years, second-tier art cities such as Cleveland, New Orleans, and Kansas City have participated in reaffirming place-identity through developing and hosting an art fair, biennial or international exhibition. Centered on converging local arts and culture with the international art world, the local is revisited and has become a point of economic and marketing focus. Demonstrating that cities other than art centers can participate in larger art conversations and have the resources to so, contribute to the long-term retention of local and regional artists. Curator Hesse McGraw explains the significance of this, “As artists move from Kansas City to New York or from Omaha to Portland or Seattle or wherever, the stability of the cultural identity of that place dissolves or becomes transitional.”¹⁶⁶ Art reinforces local culture because of its foundational tie to the habitus and visual capacity in which it is produced; and provides another layer of interaction with components that comprise personal and local identity. It is for this reason that the local is being revisited as a locus of originality and new experiences. “Attracting large audiences

¹⁶³ “Visit Denver,” *Denver Colorado Vacations & Conventions*, Accessed April 1, 2019. <https://www.denver.org/>.

¹⁶⁴ “Official Tourism Website for Fargo, ND & Moorhead, MN,” *Moorhead*, Accessed April 1, 2019. <https://www.fargomoorhead.org/>.

¹⁶⁵ Allen, *UnChain Asheville Movement Pushes Back as Anthropologie Opens for Business*.

¹⁶⁶ *Trespassers: A Conversation*, 35-36.

to art exhibitions and showcasing local artists to global critics, curators, and museum and gallery directors, biennials put local art communities into the international limelight, while stimulating cultural tourism.”¹⁶⁷ It’s an opportunity for the host city to display their investment in arts and culture while promoting the unique authenticity of their local culture. As Hans Belting claims, “*art production* is presently turning into *culture production*.”¹⁶⁸

Observing the main objective for the following art events reveals a commonality of interest and intent. *Prospect New Orleans* grew out of inviting “residents and visitors to celebrate art and artists as intrinsic to the local landscape and to engage New Orleans as they never have before.”¹⁶⁹ *Open Spaces* in Kansas City, Missouri followed along the same energy, to “share the unique cultural story of Kansas City among ourselves and with our visitors.”¹⁷⁰ The *FRONT International Catalogue* reads, “Visitors to FRONT will discover (or rediscover) Cleveland and its arts institutions and see the city in an entirely new way.”¹⁷¹ Interacting with the city and its sense of place is overtly emphasized, the art on display being just one aspect of the entire experience. It is similar to the situation of an Olympic host city in which the local culture is on display for all to see and consume. This presentation of the local for the contemporary global represents a shift to a branded commercialism of place within the art world. In facilitating an art fair,

¹⁶⁷ Pablo, Markin. “Global Art Biennials, the International Art World, and the Shanghai Biennale,” *Research Gate*, 2016.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299469869_Global_Art_Biennials_the_International_Art_World_and_the_Shanghai_Biennale/download.

¹⁶⁸ Belting, *The Plurality of Art Worlds*, 247.

¹⁶⁹ “History and Mission,” *Prospect New Orleans*, Accessed March 2019.

<https://www.prospectneworleans.org/history-mission>

¹⁷⁰ “About Open Spaces 2018,” *Open Spaces Kansas City Arts Experience*, Accessed March 2019.

<https://openspaceskc.com/about/about-open-spaces/>.

¹⁷¹ “FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art: An American City,” Ed. by Michelle Grabner. (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2018), 7.

exhibition or biennial, proving the host location has the artists, resources, venues, and funding to support a local art market and community is necessary. It is also the idea that if you can draw them there, you have what it takes to make them stay.

The revisiting of the local through art fairs and biennials contributes to the existence of “multiple modernities,” as previously introduced.¹⁷² Exhibiting local and/or regional and international artists side by side encompasses the epitome of globalization and flattens the structure of art center and periphery. An excerpt from *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* explains, “Since the 1990s, art’s new outposts, called biennials, have reached the most unlikely places. As recurring events, they serve not only the recovery of “alternative modernities,” but also the emergence of new art worlds that had been marginalized during modernism.”¹⁷³

The significance of these budding art events is place: their location in relation to prominent art centers both in physical distance, art market value, and cultural capital. Money and resources are being redistributed within the art world, as evident with the growth of co-op studio spaces and biennials across the United States. Cities and communities are investing in their local art market to encourage more artists to stay, and develop as a local and/or regional site of artistic and cultural production. By establishing a piece of the art market for themselves, cultural capital is being reallocated to more locations and away from one central source of distribution. Charlotte Bydler explains the role of biennials as “vectors of a progressive ‘culturalization’ that is breaking up the

¹⁷² Zentrum Für Kunst Und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, *The Global Contemporary*, 18.

¹⁷³ Belting, *The Plurality of Art Worlds*, 249.

modern art concept.”¹⁷⁴ Second-tier cities hosting biennials are forging a decentralized art network that is creating points of interaction, visibility and access for artists, curators, and collectors alike. The exchanging of art practice and discourse outside art centers such as New York City challenges its long held “hegemonic outward gaze.”¹⁷⁵ Erika Doss concurs arguing, “While New York still claims to the art capital of the world, the emergence of “second city” art capitals like Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, Santa Fe, and Seattle suggests that the art world’s de-centralization, at least in the United States.”¹⁷⁶

As a result, the art world expands and begins to operate like a two-way street. Information and art production no longer unilaterally flow from periphery to the center to fuel the larger art market machine. Democratized communication and online art marketing platforms contribute to the specialization and promotion of individual, localized art markets existing simultaneously.¹⁷⁷ Michelle Grabner comments that the art world is “not necessarily globalized in way that is freeing, but monetarily globalized. We have the possibility, we who are outside of the centers; of thinking about what is it we value, what is contemporary. What does that mean for us in terms of art. What is a practice outside those worlds? And not have it be about aesthetics but about what we are in relationship to.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Charlotte Bydler, “The Global Art World Inc.,” in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, eds. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM/Center for Art and Media, 2013), 250.

¹⁷⁵ Robson, *Introducing here.*, 12.

¹⁷⁶ Doss, *Cultural Globalization*, 20.

¹⁷⁷ Atonia Marten, “Performing Identities in the Arena of the Global Art World: Nastio Mosquito,” in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, eds. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM/Center for Art and Media, 2013), 291.

¹⁷⁸ Grabner and Kabat, *A Discussion on Regionalism in the Arts*.

Cleveland, Kansas City, New Orleans, and other locations are actively questioning their position in the larger art world, what they want to represent, and how they want to be seen. It is a way of anchoring a sense of place in the current consortium of culture production. These art events are significant because they are deeply rooted in place-based experiences, and are asserting local criteria through which to observe and interact with the artwork and events. It also indicates the shifting of the art world apparatus to one that is truly more global, asking the question: what does location or place do to art that was and was not made in the host city? How is the artwork not made locally in conversation with the host city or local artwork? It becomes an engagement with the surrounding environment instead of just the exhibition space.

The revisiting and promoting of the local in a contemporary global encourages a two-way street of exchanging art production and discourse. *Dialogue As Art*, a For Freedoms 50 State Initiative affiliated event is such example of the local in a contemporary global, and it also divulges a lack of art discourse in a South Dakota community and its hunger for it.

For Freedoms was founded in 2016 as a “platform for creative civic engagement, discourse, and direct action.”¹⁷⁹ A network of artists and organizations developed from partnering with For Freedoms provides opportunities for creative collaboration, grounded in art as a tool for social change.¹⁷⁹ The network is continuously being added to in order to provide more resources and talent, while nationally connecting artists and organizations regardless of distance. The 50 State Initiative was a nationwide decentralized event that took place leading up to the mid-term elections from September

¹⁷⁹ “History,” *For Freedoms*, Accessed March 2019. <https://forfreedoms.org/about/>.

to November 2018.¹⁸⁰ Each state was encouraged to participate in some way: billboards, exhibitions, lawn signs, installations and public programming are the common forms.¹⁸⁰

In Aberdeen, South Dakota an interactive exhibition and panel discussion was held as an affiliated event with the 50 State Initiative.¹⁸¹ The discussion panel was comprised of a curator from the South Dakota Museum of Art, two Art Department faculty members from Northern State University, and staff members of the Aberdeen Recreation and Cultural Center.¹⁸¹ They openly discussed making art in the Midwest, art as a tool for social change, and how artists creatively respond to society. The advantages and challenges posed by being an artist and making art in South Dakota was discussed in depth, as the majority of attendees were artists and/or involved in art organizations.¹⁸¹

Attendees made notable comments such as, “We need more discussions like this,” “This is the kind of event I’ve been wanting to happen.”¹⁸² The event organizer received many energetic “thank yous” for holding it and bringing people together around this particular topic of discussion.¹⁸² The positive reactions focus on finally having the opportunity to talk about a topic that initially seems difficult to address.¹⁸² *Dialogue As Art* offered a space for artists and members of the community to critique and question the social structures within which they create and promote, art.¹⁸² There was a shared awareness of the local audience’s visual capacity for art, both its opportunities and specific limitations, and how it affects the approach to art making for South Dakota artists. The reactions from attendees indicate an interest in critical art discourse that is specific to their regional and local art market structure that is not being met.

¹⁸⁰ “50 State Initiative & Beyond,” *For Freedoms*, Accessed March 2019. <https://forfreedoms.org/explore/>.

¹⁸¹ Alexis Doerr, “Dialogue As Art,” September, 2018.

<https://www.alexisdoerr.com/forfreedoms50stateinitiatedialogueasart>.

¹⁸² Doerr, *Dialogue As Art*.

The event *Dialogue As Art* demonstrates a national organization collaborating and assisting in the facilitation of localized art programming. Each of the events that took place from September to November 2018 grew out of place-based questions or discussions that the surrounding community wanted to address.¹⁸³ The structure provided by For Freedoms, such as the promotional materials, event framework, and discussion/curatorial questions as a jumping off point, offered a direction that associated with the 50 State Initiative but left room for the hosting community to make it their own.¹⁸³ It was the ideal connection of the local experience with the larger art conversations and how those two converge and influence each other. The 50 State Initiative shows how the notion of “multiple modernities” does not mean disparate localized art worlds, but cities and communities who want to contribute and engage in larger art conversations.¹⁸⁴ It is letting the local co-exist and collaborate with other local and regional cultures, instead of all contributing to one art center structure.

As the existence of “multiple modernities” becomes more realized with the growth of international art exhibitions, biennials and continued global interconnectedness, the essence of the local will be more definite and anchored in place-identity.¹⁸⁴ The existence of the local will tend to be more commercialized, as the branding of cities demonstrates, in order to oppose the homogenization of culture. Art plays a key role, as shown with the theories of Bourdieu and Baxandall, because it represents and reinforces local culture. Fostering more means of interaction between

¹⁸³ *50 State Initiative & Beyond*.

¹⁸⁴ Zentrum Für Kunst Und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, *The Global Contemporary*, 18.

localities instead of periphery to the center is the future of the local in a contemporary global.

CONCLUSION

“Places are not things to be found out there in the world; they are ideas about spaces that are constructed by people, in acts of observation and interpretation, and more durably in writing, in visual arts, in the built environment,” writes Douglas Powell.¹⁸⁵ As explored with Bourdieu’s habitus and Baxandall’s visual capacity, the concept of place involves multiple layers of the external and internal experience converging. As long as people and artists interact with their surroundings, place will serve as a point of personal identity and evaluation. The local culture it produces will remain a constant, symbols and idioms informing the art-making process of local artists.

Globalization continues to change how the art world functions and is structured. The acknowledgment of “multiple modernities” presents a new method of engaging with art discourse and its dissemination.¹⁸⁶ Second-tier cities are carving out a piece of the art market for themselves, shifting the art world to one comprised of more dispersed networks and platforms for recognized art production. Thus this revisiting of the local is placing it as a mainstay of the contemporary global.

¹⁸⁵ Douglas Reichert Powell, “From the Playground to the Dumping Ground: Making Regional Connections in Unlikely Places,” in *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 67.

¹⁸⁶ Zentrum Für Kunst Und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, *The Global Contemporary*, 18.

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